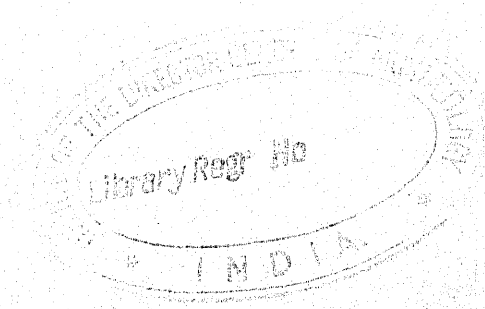


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THE  
MAKING OF RELIGION

BY  
ANDREW LANG

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HONORARY FELLOW OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD  
SOMETIME GIFFORD LECTURER IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

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TO THE PRINCIPAL  
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DEAR PRINCIPAL DONALDSON,

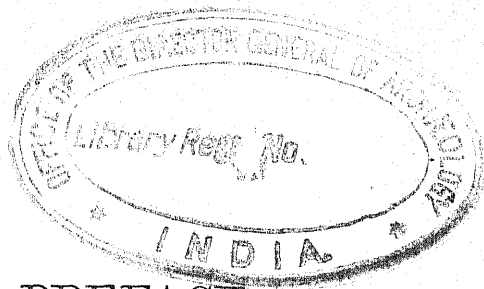
I hope you will permit me to lay at the feet of the University of St. Andrews, in acknowledgment of her life-long kindnesses to her old pupil, these chapters on the early History of Religion. They may be taken as representing the Gifford Lectures delivered by me, though in fact they contain very little that was spoken from Lord Gifford's chair. I wish they were more worthy of an Alma Mater which fostered in the past the leaders of forlorn hopes that were destined to triumph; and the friends of lost causes who fought bravely against Fate—Patrick Hamilton, Cargill, and Argyll, Beaton and Montrose, and Dundee.

Believe me

Very sincerely yours,

ANDREW LANG.





## PREFACE

TO

### THE NEW EDITION

---

By the nature of things this book falls under two divisions. The first eight chapters criticise the current anthropological theory of the origins of the belief in *spirits*. Chapters ix.-xvii., again, criticise the current anthropological theory as to how, the notion of *spirit* once attained, man arrived at the idea of a Supreme Being. These two branches of the topic are treated in most modern works concerned with the Origins of Religion, such as Mr. Tylor's 'Primitive Culture,' Mr. Herbert Spencer's 'Principles of Sociology,' Mr. Jevons's 'Introduction to the History of Religion,' the late Mr. Grant Allen's 'Evolution of the Idea of God,' and many others. Yet I have been censured for combining, in this work, the two branches of my subject; and the second part has been regarded as but faintly connected with the first.

The reason for this criticism seems to be, that while one small set of students is interested in, and familiar with the themes examined in the first part (namely the psychological characteristics of certain mental states from which, in part, the doctrine of spirits is said to have arisen), that set of students neither knows nor cares anything about the

matter handled in the second part. This group of students is busied with 'Psychical Research,' and the obscure human faculties implied in alleged cases of hallucination, telepathy, 'double personality,' human automatism, clairvoyance, and so on. Meanwhile anthropological readers are equally indifferent as to that branch of psychology which examines the conditions of hysteria, hypnotic trance, 'double personality,' and the like. Anthropologists have not hitherto applied to the savage mental conditions, out of which, in part, the doctrine of 'spirits' arose, the recent researches of French, German, and English psychologists of the new school. As to whether these researches into abnormal psychological conditions do, or do not, indicate the existence of a transcendental region of human faculty, anthropologists appear to be unconcerned. The only English exception known to me is Mr. Tylor, and his great work, 'Primitive Culture,' was written thirty years ago, before the modern psychological studies of Professor William James, Dr. Romaine Newbold, M. Richet, Dr. Janet, Professor Sidgwick, Mr. Myers, Mr. Gurney, Dr. Parish, and many others had commenced.

Anthropologists have gone on discussing the trances, and visions, and so-called 'demoniacal possession' of savages, as if no new researches into similar facts in the psychology of civilised mankind existed; or, if they existed, threw any glimmer of light on the abnormal psychology of savages. I have, on the other hand, thought it desirable to sketch out a study of savage psychology in the light of recent psychological research. Thanks to this daring novelty, the book has been virtually taken as two books; anthropologists have criticised the second part, and one or two Psychical Researchers have criticised the first part; each school leaving one part severely alone. Such are the natural results of a too restricted specialism.

Even to Psychical Researchers the earlier division is of scant interest, because witnesses to *successful* abnormal or supernormal faculty in savages cannot be brought into court and cross-examined. But I do not give anecdotes of such savage successes as evidence to *facts*; they are only illustrations, and evidence to *beliefs* and *methods* (as of crystal gazing and automatic utterances of 'secondary personality'), which, among the savages, correspond to the supposed facts examined by Psychical Research among the civilised. I only point out, as Bastian had already pointed out, the existence of a field that deserves closer study by anthropologists who can observe savages in their homes. We need persons trained in the psychological laboratories of Europe and America, as members of anthropological expeditions. It may be noted that, in his 'Letters from the South Seas,' Mr. Louis Stevenson makes some curious observations, especially on a singular form of hypnotism applied to himself with fortunate results. The method, used in native medicine, was novel; and the results were entirely inexplicable to Mr. Stevenson, who had not been amenable to European hypnotic practice. But he was not a trained expert.

Anthropology must remain incomplete while it neglects this field, whether among wild or civilised men. In the course of time this will come to be acknowledged. It will be seen that we cannot really account for the origin of the belief in spirits while we neglect the scientific study of those psychical conditions, as of hallucination and the hypnotic trance, in which that belief must probably have had some, at least, of its origins.

As to the second part of the book, I have argued that the first dim surmises as to a Supreme Being need not have arisen (as on the current anthropological theory) in the notion of spirits at all. (See chapter xi.) Here I

have been said to draw a mere 'verbal distinction,' but no distinction can be more essential. If such a Supreme Being as many savages acknowledge is *not* envisaged by them as a 'spirit,' then the theories and processes by which he is derived from a ghost of a dead man are invalid, and remote from the point. As to the origin of a belief in a kind of germinal Supreme Being (say the Australian Baiame), I do not, in this book, offer any opinion. I again and again decline to offer an opinion. Critics, none the less, have said that I attribute the belief to revelation! I shall therefore here indicate what I think probable in so obscure a field.

As soon as man had the idea of 'making' things, he might conjecture as to a Maker of things which he himself had not made, and could not make. He would regard this unknown Maker as a 'magnified non-natural man.' These speculations appear to me to need less reflection than the long and complicated processes of thought by which Mr. Tylor believes, and probably believes with justice, the theory of 'spirits' to have been evolved. (See chapter iii.) This conception of a magnified non-natural man, who is a Maker, being given; his Power would be recognised, and fancy would clothe one who had made such useful things with certain other moral attributes, as of Fatherhood, goodness, and regard for the ethics of his children; these ethics having been developed naturally in the evolution of social life. In all this there is nothing 'mystical,' nor anything, as far as I can see, beyond the limited mental powers of any beings that deserve to be called human.

But I hasten to add that another theory may be entertained. Since this book was written there appeared 'The Native Tribes of Central Australia,' by Professor Spencer



and Mr. Gillen, a most valuable study.<sup>1</sup> The authors, closely scrutinising the esoteric rites of the Arunta and other tribes in Central Australia, found none of the moral precepts and attributes which (according to Mr. Howitt, to whom their work is dedicated), prevail in the mysteries of the natives of New South Wales and Victoria. (See chapter x.) What they found was a belief in 'the great spirit, *Twanyirika*,' who is believed 'by uninitiated boys and women' (but, apparently, not by adults) to preside over the cruel rites of tribal initiation.<sup>2</sup> No more is said, no myths about 'the great spirit' are given. He is dismissed in a brief note. Now if these ten lines contain *all* the native lore of *Twanyirika*, he is a mere bugbear, not believed in (apparently) by adults, but invented by them to terrorise the women and boys. Next, granting that the information of Messrs. Spencer and Gillen is exhaustive, and granting that (as Mr. J. G. Frazer holds, in his essays in the 'Fortnightly Review,' April and May, 1899) the Arunta are the most primitive of mortals, it will seem to follow that the *moral* attributes of Baiame and other gods of other Australian regions are later accretions round the form of an original and confessed bugbear, as among the primitive Arunta, 'a bogle of the nursery,' in the phrase repudiated by Maitland of Lethington. Though not otherwise conspicuously more civilised than the Arunta (except, perhaps, in marriage relations), Mr. Howitt's South Eastern natives will have improved the Arunta confessed 'bogle' into a beneficent and moral Father and Maker. Religion will have its origin in a tribal joke, and will have become not '*diablement*,' but '*divinement*,' '*changée en route*.' Readers of Messrs. Spencer and Gillen will see that the Arunta philosophy,

<sup>1</sup> Macmillans, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 246, note.

primitive or not, is of a high ingenuity, and so artfully composed that it contains no room either for a Supreme Being or for the doctrine of the survival of the soul, with a future of rewards and punishments; opinions declared to be extant among other Australian tribes. There is no creator, and every soul, after death, is reincarnated in a new member of the tribe. On the other hand (granting that the brief note on Twanyirika is exhaustive), the Arunta, in their isolation, may have degenerated in religion, and may have dropped, in the case of Twanyirika, the moral attributes of Baiame. It may be noticed that, in South Eastern Australia, the Being who presides, like Twanyirika, over initiations is *not* the supreme being, but a son or deputy of his, such as the Kurnai Tundun. We do not know whether the Arunta have, or have had and lost, or never possessed, a being superior to Twanyirika.

With regard to all such moral, and, in certain versions, creative Beings as Baiame, criticism has taken various lines. There is the high *a priori* line that savage minds are incapable of originating the notion of a moral Maker. I have already said that the notion, in an early form, seems to be well within the range of any minds deserving to be called human. Next, the facts are disputed. I can only refer readers to the authorities cited. They speak for tribes in many quarters of the world, and the witnesses are laymen as well as missionaries. I am accused, again, of using a misleading rhetoric, and of thereby covertly introducing Christian or philosophical ideas into my account of 'savages guiltless of Christian teaching.' As to the latter point, I am also accused of mistaking for native opinions the results of 'Christian teaching.' One or other charge must fall to the ground. As to my rhetoric, in the use of such words as 'Creator,'

'Eternal,' and the like, I shall later qualify and explain it. For a long discussion between myself and Mr. Sidney Hartland, involving minute detail, I may refer the reader to *Folk-Lore*, the last number of 1898 and the first of 1899, and to the Introduction to the new edition of my 'Myth, Ritual, and Religion' (1899).

Where relatively high moral attributes are assigned to a Being, I have called the result 'Religion ;' where the same Being acts like Zeus in Greek fable, plays silly or obscene tricks, is lustful and false, I have spoken of 'Myth.'<sup>1</sup> These distinctions of Myth and Religion may be, and indeed are, called arbitrary. The whole complex set of statements about the Being, good or bad, sublime or silly, are equally Myths, it may be urged. Very well ; but one set, the loftier set, is fitter to survive, and does survive, in what we still commonly call Religion ; while the other set, the puerile set of statements, is fairly near to extinction, and is usually called Mythology. One set has been the root of a goodly tree : the other set is being lopped off, like the parasitic mistletoe.

I am arguing that the two classes of ideas arise from two separate human moods ; moods as different and distinct as lust and love. I am arguing that, as far as our information goes, the nobler set of ideas is as ancient as the lower. Personally (though we cannot have direct evidence) I find it easy to believe that the loftier notions are the earlier. If man began with the conception of a powerful and beneficent Maker or Father, then I can see how the humorous savage fancy ran away with the idea of Power, and attributed to a potent being just such tricks as a waggish and libidinous savage would like to play if he could. Moreover, I have actually traced (in 'Myth,

<sup>1</sup> See the new edition of *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, especially the new Introduction.

Ritual, and Religion') some plausible processes of mythical accretion. The early mind was not only religious, in its way, but scientific, in its way. It embraced the idea of Evolution as well as the idea of Creation. To one mood a Maker seemed to exist. But the institution of Totemism (whatever its origin) suggested the idea of Evolution; for men, it was held, developed out of their Totems—animals and plants. But then, on the other hand, Zeus, or Baïame, or Mungun-ngaur, was regarded as their Father. How were these contradictions to be reconciled? Easily, thus: Zeus *was* the Father, but, in each case, was the Father by an amour in which he wore the form of the Totem—snake, swan, bull, ant, dog, or the like. At once a degraded set of secondary erotic myths cluster around Zeus.

Again, it is notoriously the nature of man to attribute every institution to a primal inventor or legislator. Men then, find themselves performing certain rites, often of a buffooning or scandalous character; and, in origin, mainly magical, intended for the increase of game, edible plants, or, later, for the benefit of the crops. *Why* do they perform these rites? they ask: and, looking about, as usual, for a primal initiator, they attribute what they do to a primal being, the Corn Spirit, Demeter, or to Zeus, or to Baïame, or Manabozho, or Punjel. This is man's usual way of going back to origins. Instantly, then, a new set of parasitic myths crystallises round a Being who, perhaps, was originally moral. The savage mind, in short, has not maintained itself on the high level, any more than the facetious mediæval myths maintained themselves, say, on the original level of the conception of the character of St. Peter, the keeper of the keys of Heaven.

All this appears perfectly natural and human, and in this, and in other ways, what we call low Myth may have invaded the higher realms of Religion: a lower invaded a

higher element. But reverse the hypothesis. Conceive that Zeus, or Baiame, was *originally*, not a Father and guardian, but a lewd and tricky ghost of a medicine-man, a dancer of indecent dances, a wooer of other men's wives, a shape-shifter, a burlesque droll, a mere jocular bugbear, like Twanyirika. By what means did he come to be accredited later with his loftiest attributes, and with regard for the tribal ethics, which, in practice, he daily broke and despised? Students who argue for the possible priority of the lowest, or, as I call them, mythical attributes of the Being, must advance an hypothesis of the concretion of the nobler elements around the original wanton and mischievous ghost.

Then let us suppose that the Arunta Twanyirika, a confessed bugbear, discredited by adults, and only invented to keep women and children in order, was the original germ of the moral and fatherly Baiame, of South Eastern Australian tribes. How, in that case, did the adults of the tribe fall into their own trap, come to believe seriously in their invented bugbear, and credit him with the superintendence of such tribal ethics as generosity and unselfishness? What were the processes of the conversion of Twanyirika? I do not deny that this theory may be correct, but I wish to see an hypothesis of the process of elevation.

I fail to frame such an hypothesis. Grant that the adults merely chuckle over Twanyirika, whose 'voice' they themselves produce by whirling the wooden tundun, or bull-roarer. Grant that, on initiation, the boys learn that 'the great spirit' is a mere bogle, invented to mystify the women, and keep them away from the initiatory rites. How, then, did men come to believe in *him* as a terrible, all-seeing, all-knowing, creative, and potent moral being? For this, undeniably, is the belief of many Australian

tribes, where his 'voice' (or rather that of his subordinate) is produced by whirling the tundun. That these higher beliefs are of European origin, Mr. Howitt denies. How were they evolved out of the notion of a confessed artificial bogle? I am unable to frame a theory.

From my point of view, namely, that the higher and simple ideas may well be the earlier, I have, at least, offered a theory of the processes by which the lower attributes crystallised around a conception supposed (*argumenti gratia*) to be originally high. Other processes of degradation would come in, as (on my theory) the creed and practice of Animism, or worship of human ghosts, often of low character, swamped and invaded the prior belief in a fairly moral and beneficent, but not originally spiritual, Being. My theory, at least, *is* a theory, and, rightly or wrongly, accounts for the phenomenon, the combination of the highest divine and the lowest animal qualities in the same Being. But I have yet to learn how, if the lowest myths are the earliest, the highest attributes came in time to be conferred on the hero of the lowest myths. Why, or how, did a silly buffoon, or a confessed 'bogle' arrive at being regarded as a patron of such morality as had been evolved? An hypothesis of the processes involved must be indicated. It is not enough to reply, in general, that the rudimentary human mind is illogical and confused. That is granted; but there must have been a method in its madness. What that method was (from my point of view) I have shown, and it must be as easy for opponents to set forth what, from their point of view, the method was.

We are here concerned with what, since the time of the earliest Greek philosophers, has been the *crux* of mythology: why are infamous myths told about 'the Father of gods and men'? We can easily explain the nature of the myths.

They are the natural flowers of savage fancy and humour. But wherefore do they crystallise round Zeus? I have, at least, shown some probable processes in the evolution.

Where criticism has not disputed the facts of the moral attributes, *now* attached to, say, an Australian Being, it has accounted for them by a supposed process of borrowing from missionaries and other Europeans. In this book I deal with that hypothesis as urged by Sir A. B. Ellis, in West Africa (chapter xiii.). I need not have taken the trouble, as this distinguished writer had already, in a work which I overlooked, formally withdrawn, as regards Africa, his theory of 'loan-gods.' Miss Kingsley, too, is no believer in the borrowing hypothesis for West Africa, in regard, that is, to the highest divine conception. I was, when I wrote, unaware that, especially as concerns America and Australia, Mr. Tylor had recently advocated the theory of borrowing ('Journal of Anthropol. Institute,' vol. xxi.). To Mr. Tylor's arguments, when I read them, I replied in the 'Nineteenth Century,' January 1899: 'Are Savage Gods Borrowed from Missionaries?' I do not here repeat my arguments, but await the publication of Mr. Tylor's 'Gifford Lectures,' in which his hypothesis may be reinforced, and may win my adhesion.

It may here be said, however, that if the Australian higher religious ideas are of recent and missionary origin, they would necessarily be known to the native women, from whom, in fact, they are absolutely concealed by the men, under penalty of death. Again, if the Son, or Sons, of Australian chief Beings resemble part of the Christian dogma, they much more closely resemble the Apollo and Hermes of Greece.<sup>1</sup> But nobody will say that the Australians borrowed them from Greek mythology!

<sup>1</sup> See Introductions to my *Homeric Hymns*. Allen. 1899.

In chapter xiv., owing to a bibliographical error of my own, I have done injustice to Mr. Tylor, by supposing him to have overlooked Strachey's account of the Virginian god Ahone. He did not overlook Ahone, but mistrusted Strachey. In an excursus on Ahone, in the new edition of 'Myth, Ritual, and Religion,' I have tried my best to elucidate the bibliography and other aspects of Strachey's account, which I cannot regard as baseless. Mr. Tylor's opinion is, doubtless, different, and may prove more persuasive. As to Australia, Mr. Howitt, our best authority, continues to disbelieve in the theory of borrowing.

I have to withdraw in chapters x. xi. the statement that 'Darumulun never died at all.' Mr. Hartland has corrected me, and pointed out that, among the Wiraijuri, a myth represents him as having been destroyed, for his offences, by Baiame. In that tribe, however, Darumulun is not the highest, but a subordinate Being. Mr. Hartland has also collected a few myths in which Australian Supreme Beings *do* (contrary to my statement) 'set the example of sinning.' Nothing can surprise me less, and I only wonder that, in so savage a race, the examples, hitherto collected, are so rare, and so easily to be accounted for on the theory of processes of crystallisation of myths already suggested.

As to a remark in Appendix B, Mr. Podmore takes a distinction. I quote his remark, 'the phenomena described are quite inexplicable by ordinary mechanical means,' and I contrast this, as illogical, with his opinion that a girl 'may have been directly responsible for all that took place.' Mr. Podmore replies that what was 'described' is not necessarily identical with what *occurred*. Strictly speaking, he is right; but the evidence was copious, was given by many witnesses, and (as offered by



me) was in part *contemporary* (being derived from the local newspapers), so that here Mr. Podmore's theory of illusions of memory on a large scale, developed in the five weeks which elapsed before he examined the spectators, is out of court. The evidence was of contemporary published record.

The handling of fire by Home is accounted for by Mr. Podmore, in the same chapter, as the result of Home's use of a 'non-conducting substance.' Asked, 'what substance?' he answered, 'asbestos.' Sir William Crookes, again repeating his account of the performance which he witnessed, says, 'Home took up a lump of red-hot charcoal about twice the size of an egg into his hand, *on which certainly no asbestos was visible*. He blew into his hands, and the flames could be seen coming out between his fingers, and he carried the charcoal round the room.'<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Crookes stood close beside Home. The light was that of the fire and of two candles. Probably Sir William could see a piece of asbestos, if it was covering Home's hands, which he was watching.

What I had to say, by way of withdrawal, qualification, explanation, or otherwise, I inserted (in order to seize the earliest opportunity) in the Introduction to the recent edition of my 'Myth, Ritual, and Religion' (1899). The reader will perhaps make his own kind deductions from my rhetoric when I talk, for example, about a Creator in the creed of low savages. They have no business, anthropologists declare, to entertain so large an idea. But in 'The Journal of the Anthropological Institute,' N.S. II., Nos. 1, 2, p. 85, Dr. Bennett gives an account of the religion of the cannibal Fangs of the Congo, first described by Du Chaillu. 'These anthropophagi have some idea of a God, a superior being, their

<sup>1</sup> *Journal S.P.R.*, December 1899, p. 147.

*Tata* ("Father"), *a bo mam merere* ("he made all things"). Anyambi is their *Tata* (Father), and ranks above all other Fang gods, because *a'ne yap* (literally, "he lives in heaven"). This is inconsiderate in the Fangs. A set of native cannibals have no business with a creative Father who is in heaven. I say 'creative' because 'he made all things,' and (as the bowler said about a 'Yorker') 'what else can you call him?' In all such cases, where 'creator' and 'creative' are used by me, readers will allow for the imperfections of the English language. As anthropologists say, the savages simply cannot have the corresponding ideas; and I must throw the blame on people who, knowing the savages and their language, assure us that they *have*. This Fang Father or *Tata* 'is considered indifferent to the wants and sufferings of men, women, and children.' Offerings and prayers are therefore made, not to him, but to the ghosts of parents, who are more accessible. This additional information precisely illustrates my general theory, that the chief Being was not evolved out of ghosts, but came to be neglected as ghost-worship arose. I am not aware that Dr. Bennett is a missionary. Anthropologists distrust missionaries, and most of my evidence is from laymen. If the anthropological study of religion is to advance, the high and usually indolent chief Beings of savage religions must be carefully examined, not consigned to a casual page or paragraph. I have found them most potent, and most moral, where ghost-worship has not been evolved; least potent, or at all events most indifferent, where ghost-worship is most in vogue. The inferences (granting the facts) are fatal to the current anthropological theory.

The phrases 'Creator,' 'creative,' as applied to Anyambi, or Baiame, have been described, by critics, as rhetorical, covertly introducing conceptions of which savages are

incapable. I have already shown that I only follow my authorities, and their translations of phrases in various savage tongues. But the phrase 'eternal,' applied to Anyambi or Baiame, may be misleading. I do not wish to assert that, if you talked to a savage about 'eternity,' he would understand what you intend. I merely mean what Mariner says that the Tongans mean as to the god Tá-li-y Tooboo. 'Of his origin they had no idea, rather supposing him to be eternal.' The savage theologians assert no *beginning* for such beings (as a rule), and no end, except where Unkulunkulu is by some Zulus thought to be dead, and where the Wiraijuris declare that their Darumulun (*not* supreme) was 'destroyed' by Baiame. I do not wish to credit savages with thoughts more abstract than they possess. But that their thought can be abstract is proved, even in the case of the absolutely 'primitive Arunta,' by their myth of the *Ungambikula*, 'a word which means "out of nothing," or "self-existing,"' say Messrs. Spencer and Gillen.<sup>1</sup> Once more, I find that I have spoken of some savage Beings as 'omnipresent' and 'omnipotent.' But I have pointed out that this is only a modern metaphysical rendering of the actual words attributed to the savage: 'He can go everywhere, and do everything.' As to the phrase, also used, that Baiame, for example, 'makes for righteousness,' I mean that he sanctions the morality of his people; for instance, sanctions veracity and unselfishness, as Mr. Howitt distinctly avers. These are examples of 'righteousness' in conduct. I do not mean that these virtues were impressed on savages in some supernatural way, as a critic has daringly averred that I do. The strong reaction of some early men against the cosmical process by which 'the weakest goes to the wall,' is, indeed, a curious moral

<sup>1</sup> *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 388.

phenomenon, and deserves the attention of moralists. But I never dreamed of supposing that this reaction (which extends beyond the limit of the tribe or group) had a 'supernatural' origin! It has been argued that 'tribal morality' is only a set of regulations based on the convenience of the elders of the tribe: is, in fact, as the Platonic Thrasymachus says, 'the interest of the strongest.' That does not appear to me to be demonstrated; but this is no place for a discussion of the origin of morals. 'The interest of the strongest,' and of the nomadic group, would be to knock elderly invalids on the head. But Dampier says, of the Australians, in 1688, 'Be it little, or be it much they get, every one has his part, as well the young and tender, and the old and feeble, who are not able to go abroad, as the strong and lusty.' The origin of this fair and generous dealing may be obscure, but it is precisely the kind of dealing on which, according to Mr. Howitt, the religion of the Kurnai insists (chapter x.). Thus the Being concerned does 'make for righteousness.'

With these explanations I trust that my rhetorical use of such phrases as 'eternal,' 'creative,' 'omniscient,' 'omnipotent,' 'omnipresent,' and 'moral,' may not be found to mislead, or covertly to import modern or Christian ideas into my account of the religious conceptions of savages.

As to the evidence throughout, a learned historian has informed me that 'no anthropological evidence is of any value.' If so, there can be no anthropology (in the realm of institutions). But the evidence that I adduce is from such sources as anthropologists, at least, accept, and employ in the construction of theories from which, in some points, I venture to dissent.

A. L.

# PREFACE

TO

## THE FIRST EDITION

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‘THE ONLY BEGETTER’ of this work is Monsieur Lefébure, author of ‘Les Yeux d’Horus,’ and other studies in Egyptology. He suggested the writing of the book, but is in no way responsible for the opinions expressed.

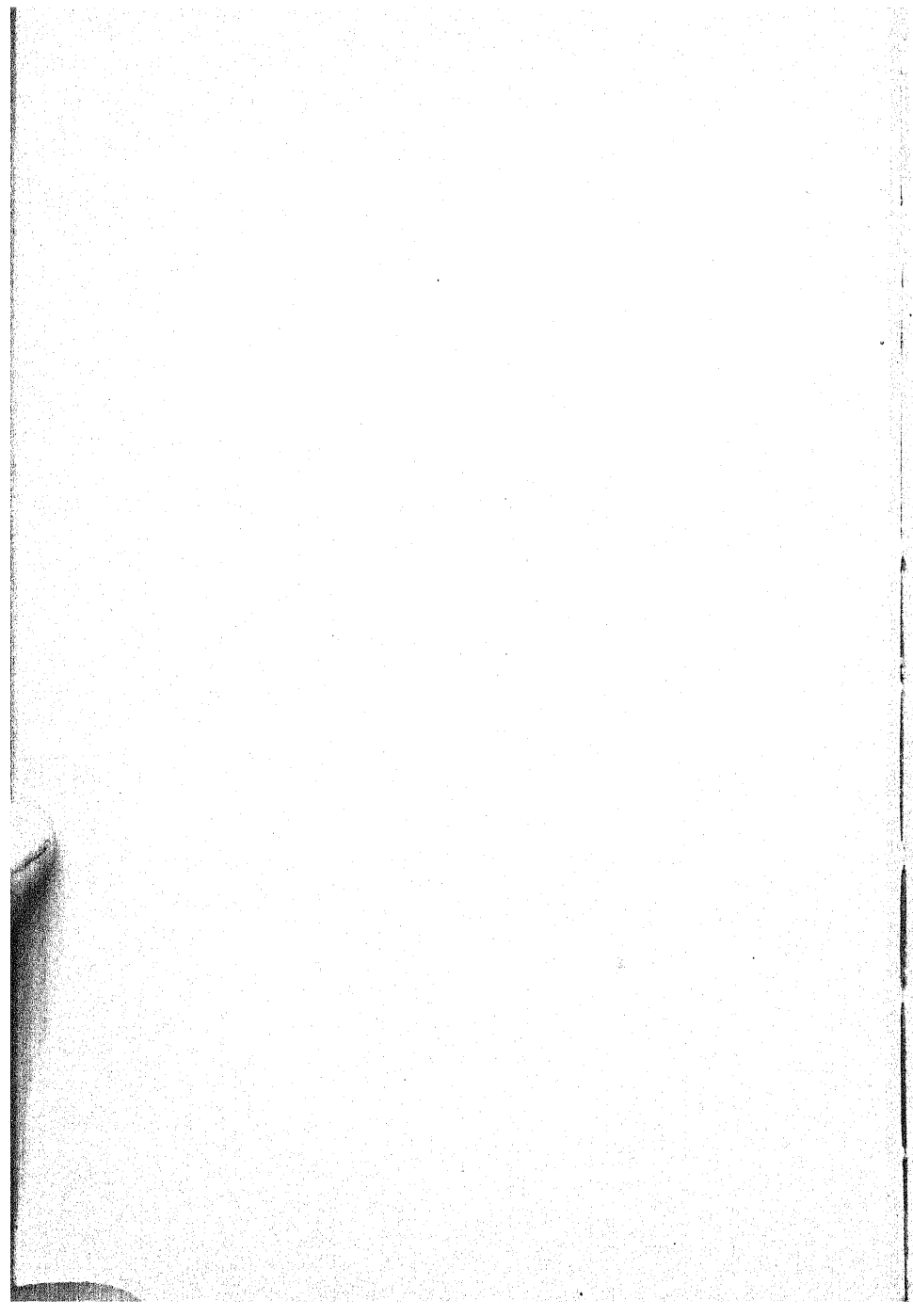
The author cannot omit the opportunity of thanking Mr. Frederic Myers for his kindness in reading the proof sheets of the earlier chapters and suggesting some corrections of statement. Mr. Myers, however, is probably not in agreement with the author on certain points; for example, in the chapter on ‘Possession.’ As the second part of the book differs considerably from the opinions which have recommended themselves to most anthropological writers on early Religion, the author must say here, as he says later, that no harm can come of trying how facts look from a new point of view, and that he certainly did not expect them to fall into the shape which he now presents for criticism.

ST. ANDREWS: *April 3, 1898.*



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# THE MAKING OF RELIGION

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## I

### *INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER*

THE modern Science of the History of Religion has attained conclusions which already possess an air of being firmly established. These conclusions may be briefly stated thus: Man derived the conception of 'spirit' or 'soul' from his reflections on the phenomena of sleep, dreams, death, shadow, and from the experiences of trance and hallucination. Worshipping first the departed souls of his kindred, man later extended the doctrine of spiritual beings in many directions. Ghosts, or other spiritual existences fashioned on the same lines, prospered till they became gods. Finally, as the result of a variety of processes, one of these gods became supreme, and, at last, was regarded as the one only God. Meanwhile man retained his belief in the existence of his own soul, surviving after the death of the body, and so reached the conception of immortality. Thus the ideas of God and of the soul are the result of early fallacious reasonings about misunderstood experiences.

It may seem almost wanton to suggest the desirableness of revising a system at once so simple, so logical, and apparently so well bottomed on facts. But there can never be any real harm in studying masses of evidence from fresh points of view. At worst, the failure of adverse

criticism must help to establish the doctrines assailed. Now, as we shall show, there are two points of view from which the evidence as to religion in its early stages has not been steadily contemplated. Therefore we intend to ask, first, what, if anything, can be ascertained as to the nature of the 'visions' and hallucinations which, according to Mr. Tylor in his celebrated work 'Primitive Culture,' lent their aid to the formation of the idea of 'spirit.' Secondly, we shall collect and compare the accounts which we possess of the High Gods and creative beings worshipped or believed in, by the most backward races. We shall then ask whether these relatively Supreme Beings, so conceived of by men in very rudimentary social conditions, can be, as anthropology declares, mere developments from the belief in ghosts of the dead.

We shall end by venturing to suggest that the savage theory of the soul may be based, at least in part, on experiences which cannot, at present, be made to fit into any purely materialistic system of the universe. We shall also bring evidence tending to prove that the idea of God, in its earliest known shape, need not logically be derived from the idea of spirit, however that idea itself may have been attained or evolved. The conception of God, then, need not be evolved out of reflections on dreams and 'ghosts.'

If these two positions can be defended with any success, it is obvious that the whole theory of the Science of Religion will need to be reconsidered. But it is no less evident that our two positions do not depend on each other. The first may be regarded as fantastic, or improbable, or may be 'masked' and left on one side. But the strength of the second position, derived from evidence of a different character, will not, therefore, be in any way impaired. Our first position can only be argued for by dint of evidence highly unpopular in character, and, as a general rule, condemned by modern science. The evidence is obtained by what is, at all events, a legitimate anthropological proceeding. We may follow Mr. Tylor's example, and collect savage *beliefs* about visions, hallucinations, 'clairvoyance,' and the acquisition of knowledge appa-

rently not attainable through the normal channels of sense. We may then compare these savage beliefs with attested records of similar *experiences* among living and educated civilised men. Even if we attain to no conclusion, or a negative conclusion, as to the actuality and supernormal character of the alleged experiences, still to compare data of savage and civilised psychology, or even of savage and civilised illusions and fables, is decidedly part, though a neglected part, of the function of anthropological science. The results, whether they do or do not strengthen our first position, must be curious and instructive, if only as a chapter in the history of human error. That chapter, too, is concerned with no mean topic, but with what we may call the X region of our nature. Out of that region, out of miracle, prophecy, vision, have certainly come forth the great religions, Christianity and Islam; and the great religious innovators and leaders, our Lord Himself, St. Francis, John Knox, Jeanne d'Arc, down to the founder of the new faith of the Sioux and Arapahoe. It cannot, then, be unscientific to compare the barbaric with the civilised beliefs and experiences about a region so dimly understood, and so fertile in potent influences. Here the topic will be examined rather by the method of anthropology than of psychology. We may conceivably have something to learn (as has been the case before) from the rough observations and hasty inferences of the most backward races.

We may illustrate this by an anecdote :

'The Northern Indians call the *Aurora Borealis* "Ed-thin," that is "Deer." Their ideas in this respect are founded on a principle one would not imagine. *Experience* has shown them that when a hairy deer-skin is briskly stroked with the hand on a dark night, it will emit many sparks of electrical fire.'

So says Hearne in his 'Journey,' published in 1795 (p. 346).

This observation of the Red Men is a kind of parable representing a part of the purport of the following treatise.

The Indians, making a hasty inference from a trivial phenomenon, arrived unawares at a probably correct conclusion, long unknown to civilised science. They connected the Aurora Borealis with electricity, supposing that multitudes of deer in the sky rubbed the sparks out of each other! Meanwhile, even in the last century, a puzzled populace spoke of the phenomenon as 'Lord Derwentwater's Lights.' The cosmic pomp and splendour shone to welcome the loyal Derwentwater into heaven, when he had given his life for his exiled king.

Now, my purpose in the earlier portion of this essay is to suggest that certain phenomena of human nature, apparently as trivial as the sparks rubbed out of a deer's hide in a dark night, may indicate, and may be allied to a force or forces, which, like the Aurora Borealis, may shine from one end of the heavens to the other, strangely illuminating the darkness of our destiny. Such phenomena science has ignored, as it so long ignored the sparks from the stroked deer-skin, and the attractive power of rubbed amber. These trivial things were not known to be allied to the lightning, or to indicate a force which man could tame and use. But just as the Indians, by a rapid careless inference, attributed the Aurora Borealis to electric influences, so (as anthropology assures us) savages everywhere have inferred the existence of soul or spirit, intelligence that

‘Does not know the bond of Time,  
Nor wear the manacles of Space,’

in part from certain apparently trivial phenomena of human faculty. These phenomena, as Mr. Tylor says, ‘the great intellectual movement of the last two centuries has simply thrown aside as worthless.’<sup>1</sup> I refer to alleged experiences, merely odd, sporadic, and, for commercial purposes, useless, such as the transference of thought from one mind to another by no known channel of sense, the occurrence of hallucinations which, *prima facie*, correspond coincidentally with unknown events at a distance, all

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 156. London, 1891.

that is called 'second sight,' or 'clairvoyance,' and other things even more obscure. Reasoning on these real or alleged phenomena, and on other quite normal and accepted facts of dream, shadow, sleep, trance, and death, savages have inferred the existence of spirit or soul, exactly as the Indians arrived at the notion of electricity (not so called by them, of course) as the cause of the Aurora Borealis. But, just as the Indians thought that the cosmic lights were caused by the rubbing together of crowded deer in the heavens (a theory quite childishly absurd), so the savage has expressed, in rude fantastic ways, his conclusion as to the existence of spirit. He believes in wandering separable souls of men, surviving death, and he has peopled with his dreams the whole inanimate universe.

My suggestion is that, in spite of his fantasies, the savage had possibly drawn from his premises an inference not wholly, or not demonstrably erroneous. As the sparks of the deer-skin indicated electricity, so the strange lights in the night of human nature may indicate faculties which science, till of late and in a few instances, has laughed at, ignored, 'thrown aside as worthless.'

It should be observed that I am not speaking of 'spiritualism,' a word of the worst associations, inextricably entangled with fraud, bad logic, and the blindest credulity. Some of the phenomena alluded to have, however, been claimed as their own province by 'spiritists,' and need to be rescued from them. Mr. Tylor writes :

'The issue raised by the comparison of savage, barbaric, and civilised spiritualism is this : Do the Red Indian medicine-man, the Tatar necromancer, the Highland ghost-seer, and the Boston medium, share the possession of belief and knowledge of the highest truth and import, which, nevertheless, the great intellectual movement of the last two centuries has simply thrown aside as worthless ?'

*Distinguo !* That does not seem to me to be the issue. In my opinion the issue is : 'Have the Red Indian, the Tatar, the Highland seer, and the Boston medium (the

least reputable of the menagerie) observed, and reasoned wildly from, and counterfeited, and darkened with imposture, certain genuine by-products of human faculty, which do not *prima facie* deserve to be thrown aside?'

That, I venture to think, is the real issue. That science may toss aside as worthless some valuable observations of savages is now universally admitted by people who know the facts. Among these observations is the whole topic of Hypnotism, with the use of suggestion for healing purposes, and the phenomena, no longer denied, of 'alternating personalities.' For the truth of this statement we may appeal to one of the greatest of Continental anthropologists, Adolf Bastian.<sup>1</sup> The missionaries, like Livingstone, usually supposed that the savage seer's declared ignorance—after his so-called fit of inspiration—of what occurred in that state, was an imposture. But nobody now doubts the similar oblivion of what has passed that sometimes follows the analogous hypnotic sleep. Of a remarkable cure, which the school of the Salpêtrière or Nancy would ascribe, with probable justice, to 'suggestion,' a savage example will be given later.

Savage hypnotism and 'suggestion,' among the Sioux and Arapahoe, has been thought worthy of a whole volume in the Reports of the Ethnological Bureau of the Smithsonian Institute (Washington, U.S., 1892-93). Republican Governments publish scientific matter 'regardless of expense,' and the essential points might have been put more shortly. They illustrate the fact that only certain persons can hypnotise others, and throw light on some peculiarities of *rapport*.<sup>2</sup> In brief, savages anticipated us in the modern science of experimental psychology, as is frankly acknowledged by the Society for Experimental Psychology of Berlin. 'That many of the so-called mystical phenomena are much more common and pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Ueber psychische Beobachtungen bei Naturvölkern.* Leipzig, Gunther, 1890.

<sup>2</sup> See especially pp. 922-926. The book is interesting in other ways, and, indeed, touching, as it describes the founding of a new Red Indian religion, on a basis of Hypnotism and Christianity.

minent among savages than among ourselves is familiar to everyone acquainted with the subject. The *ethnological* side of our inquiry demands penetrative study.<sup>1</sup>

That study I am about to try to sketch. My object is to examine some 'superstitious practices' and beliefs of savages by aid of the comparative method. I shall compare, as I have already said, the ethnological evidence for savage usages and beliefs analogous to thought-transference, coincidental hallucinations, alternating personality, and so forth, with the best attested modern examples, experimental or spontaneous. This raises the question of our evidence, which is all-important. We proceed to defend it. The savage accounts are on the level of much anthropological evidence; they may, that is, be dismissed by adversaries as 'travellers' tales.' But the best testimony for the truth of the reports as to actual belief in the facts is the undesigned coincidence of evidence from all ages and quarters.<sup>2</sup> When the stories brought by travellers, ancient and modern, learned and unlearned, pious or sceptical, agree in the main, we have all the certainty that anthropology can offer. Again, when we find practically the same strange neglected sparks, not only rumoured of in European popular superstition, but attested in many hundreds of depositions made at first hand by respectable modern witnesses, educated and responsible, we cannot honestly or safely dismiss the coincidence of report as indicating a mere 'survival' of savage superstitious belief, and nothing more.

We can no longer do so, it is agreed, in the case of hypnotic phenomena. I hope to make it seem possible that we should not do so in the matter of the hallucinations provoked by gazing in a smooth deep, usually styled 'crystal-gazing.' Ethnologically, this practice is at least as old as classical times, and is of practically world-wide distribution. I shall prove its existence in Australia, New Zealand, North America, South America, Asia, Africa, Polynesia, and among the Incas, not to speak of

<sup>1</sup> Programme of the Society, p. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, i. 9, 10.

the middle and recent European ages. The universal idea is that such visions may be 'clairvoyant.' To take a Polynesian case, 'resembling the Hawaiian *wai haruru*.' When anyone has been robbed, the priest, after praying, has a hole dug in the floor of the house, and filled with water. Then he gazes into the water, 'over which the god is supposed to place the spirit of the thief. . . . The image of the thief was, according to their account, reflected in the water, and being perceived by the priest, he named the individual, or the parties.'<sup>1</sup> Here the statement about the 'spirit' is a mere savage philosophical explanation. But the fact that hallucinatory pictures can really be seen by a fair percentage of educated Europeans, in water, glass balls, and so forth, is now confirmed by frequent experiment, and accepted by opponents, 'non-mystical writers,' like Dr. Parish of Munich.<sup>2</sup> I shall bring evidence to suggest that the visions may correctly reflect, as it were, persons and places absolutely unknown to the gazer, and that they may even reveal details unknown to every one present. Such results among savages, or among the superstitious, would be, and are, explained by the theory of 'spirits.' Modern science has still to find an explanation consistent with recognised laws of nature, but 'spirits' we shall not invoke.

In the same way I mean to examine all or most of the 'so-called mystical phenomena of savage life.' I then compare them with the better vouched for modern examples. To return to the question of *evidence*, I confess that I do not see how the adverse anthropologist, psychologist, or popular agnostic is to evade the following dilemma: To the anthropologist we say, 'The evidence we adduce is your own evidence, that of books of travel in all lands and countries. If *you* may argue from it, so may we. Some of it is evidence to unusual facts, more of it is evidence to singular beliefs, which we think not necessarily without foundation. As raising a presump-

<sup>1</sup> Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, ii. p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Hallucinations and Illusions*. English edition, pp. 63-70, 297.



tion in favour of that opinion, we cite examples in which savage observations of abnormal and once rejected facts, are now admitted by science to have a large residuum of truth, we argue that what is admitted in some cases may come to be admitted in more. No *a priori* line can here be drawn.'

To the psychologist who objects that our modern instances are mere anecdotes, we reply by asking, 'Dear sir, what are *your* modern instances? What do you know of "Mrs. A.," whom you still persistently cite as an example of morbid recurrent hallucinations? Name the German servant girl who, in a fever, talked several learned languages, which she had heard her former master, a scholar, declaim! Where did she live? who vouches for her, who heard her, who understood her? There is, you know, no evidence at all; the anecdote is told by Coleridge: the phenomena are said by him to have been observed "in a Roman Catholic town in Germany, a year or two before my arrival at Göttingen. . . . Many eminent physiologists and psychologists visited the town." Why do you not name a few out of the distinguished crowd?'<sup>1</sup> This anecdote, a rumour of a rumour of a Protestant explanation of a Catholic marvel, was told by Coleridge at least twenty years after the possible date. The psychologists copy it,<sup>2</sup> one after the other, as a flock of sheep jump where their leader has jumped. An example by way of anecdote may be permitted.

According to the current anthropological theory, the idea of soul or spirit was suggested to early men by their experiences in dreams. They seemed, in sleep, to visit remote places; therefore, they argued, something within them was capable of leaving the body and wandering about. This something was the soul or spirit. Now it is obvious that this opinion of early men would be confirmed if they ever chanced to acquire, in dreams, knowledge of places which they had never visited, and of facts as to which, in their waking state, they could have no

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Hamilton's *Lectures*, i. 345.

<sup>2</sup> Maudsley, Kerner, Carpenter, Du Prel, Zangwill.

information. This experience, indeed, would suggest problems even to Mr. Herbert Spencer, if it occurred to him.

Conversing on this topic with a friend of acknowledged philosophical eminence, I illustrated my meaning by a story of a dream. It was reported to me by the dreamer, with whom I am well acquainted, was of very recent occurrence, and was corroborated by the evidence of another person, to whom the dream was narrated, before its fulfilment was discovered. I am not at liberty to publish the details, for good reasons, but the essence of the matter was this: A. and B. (the dreamer) had common interests. A. had taken certain steps about which B. had only a surmise, and a vague one, that steps had probably been taken. A. then died, and B. in an extremely vivid dream (a thing unfamiliar to him) seemed to read a mass of unknown facts, culminating in two definite results, capable of being stated in figures. These results, by the very nature of the case, could not be known to A., so that, before he was placed out of B.'s reach by death, he could not have stated them to him, and, afterwards, had assuredly no means of doing so.

The dream, two days after its occurrence, and after it had been told to C., proved to be literally correct.

Now I am not asking the reader's belief for this anecdote (for that could only be yielded in virtue of knowledge of the veracity of B. and C.), but I invite his attention to the psychological explanation. My friend suggested that A. had told B. all about the affair, that B. had not listened (though his interests were vitally concerned), and that the crowd of curious details, naturally unfamiliar to B., had reposed in his subconscious memory, and had been revived in the dream.

Now B.'s dream was a dream of reading a mass of minute details, including names of places entirely unknown to him. It may be admitted, in accordance with the psychological theory, that B. might have received all this information from A., but, by dint of inattention—the malady of not marking—might never have been con-

*sciously* aware of what he heard. Then B.'s subconscious memory of what he did not *consciously* know might break upon him in his dream. Instances of similar mental phenomena are not uncommon. But the general result of the combined details was one which could not possibly be known to A. before his death; nor to B. could it be known at all. Yet B.'s dream represented this general result with perfect accuracy, which cannot be accounted for by the revival of subconscious memory in sleep. Neither asleep nor awake can a man remember what it is impossible for him to have known. The dream contained no *prediction*, for the results were now fixed; but (granting the good faith of the narrator) the dream did contain information not normally accessible.

However, by way of psychological explanation of the dream, my friend cited Coleridge's legend, as to the German girl and her unconscious knowledge of certain learned languages. 'And what is the evidence for the truth of Coleridge's legend?' Of course, there is none, or none known to all the psychologists who quote it from Coleridge. Neither, if true, was the legend to the point. However, psychology will accept such unauthenticated narratives, and yet will scoff at first hand, duly corroborated testimony from living and honourable people, about recent events.

Only a great force of prejudice can explain this acceptance, by psychologists, of one kind of marvellous tale on no evidence, and this rejection of another class of marvellous tale, when supported by first hand, signed and corroborated evidence, of living witnesses. I see only one escape for psychologists from this dilemma. Their marvellous tales are *possible*, though unvouched for, because they have always heard them and repeated them in lectures, and read and repeated them in books. *Our* marvellous tales are impossible, because the psychologists know that they are impossible, which means that they have not been familiar with them, from youth upwards, in lectures and manuals. But man has no right to have 'clear ideas of the possible and impossible,' like Faraday,

*a priori*, except in the exact sciences. There are other instances of weak evidence which satisfies psychologists.

Hamilton has an anecdote, borrowed from Monboddo, who got it from Mr. Hans Stanley, who, 'about twenty-six years ago,' heard it from the subject of the story, Madame de Laval. 'I have the memorandum somewhere in my papers,' says Mr. Stanley, vaguely. Then we have two American anecdotes by Dr. Flint and Mr. Rush; and such is Sir William Hamilton's equipment of odd facts for discussing the unconscious or subconscious. The least credible and worst attested of these narratives still appears in popular works on psychology. Moreover, all psychology, except experimental psychology, is based on anecdotes which people tell about their own subjective experiences. Mr. Galton, whose original researches are well known, even offered rewards in money for such narratives about visualised rows of coloured figures, and so on.

Clearly the psychologist, then, has no *prima facie* right to object to our anecdotes of experiences, which he regards as purely subjective. As evidence, we only accept them at first hand, and, when possible, the witnesses have been cross-examined personally. Our evidence then, where it consists of travellers' tales, is on a level with that which satisfies the anthropologist. Where it consists of modern statements of personal experience, our evidence is often infinitely better than much which is accepted by the non-experimental psychologist. As for the agnostic writer on the Non-Religion of the Future, M. Guyau actually illustrates the Resurrection of our Lord by an American myth about a criminal, of whom a hallucinatory phantasm appeared to each of his gaol companions, separately and successively, on a day after his execution! For this prodigious fable no hint of reference to authority is given.<sup>1</sup> Yet the evidence appears to satisfy M. Guyau, and is used by him to reinforce his argument.

The anthropologist and psychologist, then, must either admit that their evidence is no better than ours, if as

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge's mythical maid (p. 10) is set down by Mr. Samuel Laing to an experiment of Braid's! No references are given.—Laing: *Problems of the Future*.

good, or must say that they only believe evidence as to 'possible' facts. They thus constitute themselves judges of what is possible, and practically regard themselves as omniscient. Science has had to accept so many things once scoffed at as 'impossible,' that this attitude of hers, as we shall show in chapter ii., ceases to command respect.

My suggestion is that the trivial, rejected, or unheeded phenomena vouched for by the evidence here defended may, not inconceivably, be of considerable importance. But, stating the case at the lowest, if we are only concerned with illusions and fables, it cannot but be curious to note their persistent uniformity in savage and civilised life.

To make the first of our two main positions clear, and in part to justify ourselves in asking any attention for such matters, we now offer an historical sketch of the relations between Science and the so-called 'Miraculous' in the past.

## II

## SCIENCE AND 'MIRACLES'

*Historical Sketch*

RESEARCH in the X region is not a new thing under the sun. When Saul disguised himself before his conference with the Witch of Endor, he made an elementary attempt at a scientific test of the supernormal. Croesus, the king, went much further, when he tested the clairvoyance of the oracles of Greece, by sending an embassy to ask what he was doing at a given hour on a given day, and by then doing something very *bizarre*. We do not know how the Delphic oracle found out the right answer, but various easy methods of fraud at once occur to the mind. However, the procedure of Croesus, if he took certain precautions, was relatively scientific. Relatively scientific also was the inquiry of Porphyry, with whose position our own is not unlikely to be compared. Unable, or reluctant, to accept Christianity, Porphyry 'sought after a sign' of an element of supernormal truth in Paganism. But he began at the wrong end, namely at Pagan spiritualistic *séances*, with the usual accompaniments of darkness and fraud. His perplexed letter to Anebo, with the reply attributed to Iamblichus, reveal Porphyry wandering puzzled among mediums, floating lights, odd noises, queer dubious 'physical phenomena.' He did not begin with accurate experiments as to the existence of rare, and apparently supernormal human faculties, and he seems to

have attained no conclusion except that 'spirits' are 'deceitful.'<sup>1</sup>

Something more akin to modern research began about the time of the Reformation, and lasted till about 1680. The fury for burning witches led men of sense, learning, and humanity to ask whether there was any reality in witchcraft, and, generally, in the marvels of popular belief. The inquiries of Thyraeus, Lavaterus, Bodinus, Wierus, Le Loyer, Reginald Scot, and many others, tended on the whole to the negative side as regards the wilder fables about witches, but left the problems of ghosts and haunted houses pretty much where they were before. It may be observed that Lavaterus (*circ.* 1580) already put forth a form of the hypothesis of telepathy (that 'ghosts' are hallucinations produced by the direct action of one mind, or brain, upon another), while Thyraeus doubted whether the noises heard in 'haunted houses' were not mere hallucinations of the sense of hearing. But all these early writers, like Cardan, were very careless of first-hand evidence, and, indeed, preferred ghosts vouched for by classical authority, Pliny, Plutarch, or Suetonius. With the Rev. Joseph Glanvil, F.R.S. (*circ.* 1666), a more careful examination of evidence came into use. Among the marvels of Glanvil's and other tracts usually published together in his 'Sadducismus Triumphatus' will be found letters which show that he and his friends, like Henry More and Boyle, laboured to collect first-hand evidence for second sight, haunted houses, ghosts, and wraiths. The confessed object was to procure a 'Whip for the Droll,' a reply to the laughing scepticism of the Restoration. The result was to bring on Glanvil a throng of bores—he was 'worse haunted than Mr. Mompesson's house,' he says—and Mr. Pepys found his arguments 'not very convincing.' Mr. Pepys, however, was alarmed by 'our young gib-cat,' which he mistook for a 'spright.' With Henry More, Baxter, and Glanvil practically died, for the time, the

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Myers's paper on the 'Ancient Oracles,' in *Classical Essays*, and the author's 'Ancient Spiritualism,' in *Cock Lane and Common Sense*.

attempt to investigate these topics scientifically, though an impression of doubt was left on the mind of Addison. Witchcraft ceased to win belief, and was abolished, as a crime, in 1736. Some of the Scottish clergy, and John Wesley, clung fondly to the old faith, but Wodrow, and Cotton Mather (about 1710-1730) were singularly careless and unlucky in producing anything like evidence for their narratives. Ghost stories continued to be told, but not to be investigated.

Then one of the most acute of philosophers decided that investigation ought never to be attempted. This scientific attitude towards X phenomena, that of refusing to examine them, and denying them without examination, was fixed by David Hume in his celebrated essay on 'Miracles.' Hume derided the observation and study of what he called 'Miracles,' in the field of experience, and he looked for an *a priori* argument which would for ever settle the question without examination of facts. In an age of experimental philosophy, which derided *a priori* methods, this was Hume's great contribution to knowledge. His famous argument, the joy of many an honest breast, is a tissue of fallacies which might be given for exposure to beginners in logic, as an elementary exercise. In announcing his discovery, Hume amusingly displays the self-complacency and the want of humour with which we Scots are commonly charged by our critics:

'I flatter myself that I have discovered an argument which, if just, will, with the wise and learned, be an everlasting check to all kinds of superstitious delusions, and consequently will be useful as long as the world endures.'

He does not expect, however, to convince the multitude. Till the end of the world, 'accounts of miracles and prodigies, I suppose, will be found in all histories, sacred and profane.' Without saying here what he means by a miracle, Hume argues that 'experience is our only guide in reasoning.' He then defines a miracle as 'a violation of the laws of nature.' By a 'law of nature' he means a



uniformity, not of all experience, but of such experience as he will deign to admit; while he excludes, without examination, all evidence for experience of the absence of such uniformity. That kind of experience cannot be considered. 'There must be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation.' If there be any experience in favour of the event, that experience does not count. A miracle is counter to universal experience, no event is counter to universal experience, therefore no event is a miracle. If you produce evidence to what Hume calls a miracle (we shall see examples) he replies that the evidence is not valid, unless its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact. Now no error of human evidence can be more miraculous than a 'miracle.' Therefore there can be no valid evidence for 'miracles.' Fortunately, Hume now gives an example of what he means by 'miracles.' He says:—

'For, first, there is *not to be found, in all history*, any miracle attested by a *sufficient number* of men, of such unquestioned *good sense, education, and learning*, as to secure us against all delusion in themselves; of such undoubted *integrity*, as to place them beyond all suspicion of any design to deceive others; of such credit and reputation in the eyes of mankind, as to have a great deal to lose in case of their being detected in any falsehood; and at the same time attesting facts performed in such a *public manner*, and in so *celebrated a part of the world*, as to render the detection unavoidable; all which circumstances are requisite to give us a full assurance in the testimony of men.'<sup>1</sup>

Hume added a note at the end of his book, in which he contradicted every assertion which he had made in the

<sup>1</sup> The italics here are those of Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace, in his *Miracles and Modern Science*. Mr. Huxley, in his exposure of Hume's fallacies (in his *Life of Hume*), did not examine the Jansenist 'miracles' which Hume was criticising.

passage just cited ; indeed, he contradicted himself before he had written six pages.

‘There surely never was a greater number of miracles ascribed to one person than those which were lately said to have been wrought in France upon the tomb of Abbé Paris, the famous Jansenist, with whose sanctity the people were so long deluded. The curing of the sick, giving hearing to the deaf, and sight to the blind, were everywhere talked of as the usual effects of that holy sepulchre. But what is more extraordinary, many of the miracles were *immediately proved upon the spot*, before *judges of unquestioned integrity*, attested by *witnesses of credit and distinction*, in a *learned age*, and on the most *eminent theatre* that is now in the world. Nor is this all. A relation of them was published and dispersed everywhere ; nor were the Jesuits, though a learned body, supported by the civil magistrate, and determined enemies to those opinions, in whose favour the miracles were said to have been wrought, ever able *distinctly to refute or detect them*. Where shall we find such a number of circumstances, agreeing to the corroboration of one fact ? And what have we to oppose to such a cloud of witnesses, but the absolute *impossibility*, or *miraculous nature* of the events which they relate ? And this, surely, in the eyes of all reasonable people, will alone be regarded as a sufficient refutation.’

Thus Hume first denies the existence of such evidence, given in such circumstances as he demands, and then he produces an example of that very kind of evidence. Having done this, he abandons (as Mr. Wallace observes) his original assertion that the evidence does not exist, and takes refuge in alleging ‘the absolute impossibility’ of the events which the evidence supports. Thus Hume poses as a perfect judge of the possible, in a kind of omniscience. He takes his stand on the uniformity of all experience that is not hostile to his idea of the possible, and dismisses all testimony to other experience, even when it reaches his

standard of evidence. He is remote indeed from Virchow's position 'that what we call the laws of nature must vary according to our frequent new experiences.'<sup>1</sup> In his note, Hume buttresses and confirms his evidence for the Jansenist miracles. They have even a martyr, M. Montgeron, who wrote an account of the events, and, says Hume lightly, 'is now said to be somewhere in a dungeon on account of his book.' Many of the miracles of the Abbé Paris were proved immediately by witnesses before the Bishop's court at Paris, under the eye of Cardinal Noailles. . . . 'His successor was an enemy to the Jansenists, yet twenty-two *curés* of Paris . . . pressed him to examine these miracles . . . *But he wisely forbore.*' Hume adds his testimony to the character of these *curés*. Thus it is wisdom, according to Hume, to dismiss the most public and well-attested 'miracles' without examination. This is experimental science of an odd kind.

The phenomena were cases of healing, many of them surprising, of cataleptic rigidity, and of insensibility to pain, among visitors to the tomb of the Abbé Paris (1731). Had the cases been judicially examined (all medical evidence was in their favour), and had they been proved false, the cause of Hume would have profited enormously. A strong presumption would have been raised against the miracles of Christianity. But Hume applauds the wisdom of not giving his own theory this chance of a triumph. The cataleptic seizures were of the sort now familiar to science. These have, therefore, emerged from the miraculous. In fact, the phenomena which occurred at the tomb of the Abbé Paris have emerged almost too far, and now seem in danger of being too readily and too easily accepted. In 1887 MM. Binet and Féré, of the school of the Salpêtrière, published in English a popular manual styled 'Animal Magnetism.' These authors write with great caution about such alleged phenomena as the reading, by the hypnotised patient, of the thoughts in the mind of the hypnotiser. But as to the phenomena at the tomb of the

<sup>1</sup> Moll, *Hypnotism*, p. 357.

Abbé Paris, they say that 'suggestion explains them.'<sup>1</sup> That is, in the opinion of MM. Binet and Féré the so-called 'miracles' really occurred, and were worked by 'the imagination,' by 'self-suggestion.'

The most famous case—that of Mlle. Coirin—has been carefully examined by Dr. Charcot.<sup>2</sup>

Mlle. Coirin had a dangerous fall from her horse, in September 1716, in her thirty-first year. The medical details may be looked for in Dr. Charcot's essay or in Montgeron.<sup>3</sup> 'Her disease was diagnosed as cancer of the left breast,' the nipple 'fell off bodily.' Amputation of the breast was proposed, but Madame Coirin, believing the disease to be radically incurable, refused her consent. Paralysis of the left side set in (1718), the left leg shrivelling up. On August 9, 1731, Mlle. Coirin 'tried the off chance' of a miracle, put on a shift that had touched the tomb of Paris, and used some earth from the grave. On August 11, Mlle. Coirin could turn herself in bed; on the 12th the horrible wound 'was staunched, and began to close up and heal.' The paralysed side recovered life and its natural proportions. By September 3, Mlle. Coirin could go out for a drive.

All her malady, says Dr. Charcot, paralysis, 'cancer,' and all, was 'hysterical;' 'hysterical œdema,' for which he quotes many French authorities and one American. 'Under the physical [psychical?] influence brought to bear by the application of the shift . . . . the œdema, which was due to vaso-motor trouble, disappeared almost instantaneously. The breast regained its normal size.'

Dr. Charcot generously adds that shrines, like Lourdes, have cured patients in whom *he* could not 'inspire the operation of the faith cure.' He 'certainly cannot explain everything which claims to be of supernatural origin in the faith cure. We have to learn the lesson of patience.

<sup>1</sup> *Animal Magnetism*, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> A translation of his work was published in the *New Review*, January 1893.

<sup>3</sup> *La Vérité des Miracles*, Cologne, 1747, Septième Démonstration.

I am among the first to recognise that Shakespeare's words hold good to-day :

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

If Dr. Charcot had believed in what the French call *suggestion mentale*—suggestion by thought-transference (which I think he did not)—he could have explained the healing of the Centurion's servant, 'Say the word, Lord, and my servant shall be healed,' by *suggestion à distance* (telepathy), and by premising that the servant's palsy was 'hysterical.' But what do we mean by 'hysterical'? Nobody knows. The 'mind,' somehow, causes gangrenes, if not cancers, paralysis, shrinking of tissues; the mind, somehow, cures them. And what is the 'mind'?

As my object is to give savage parallels to modern instances better vouched for, I quote a singular Red Indian cure by 'suggestion.' Hearne, travelling in Canada in 1770, met a native who had 'dead palsy,' affecting the whole of one side. He was dragged on a sledge, 'reduced to a mere skeleton,' and so was placed in the magic lodge. The first step in his cure was the public swallowing by a conjurer of a board of wood, 'about the size of a barrel-stave,' twice as wide across as his mouth. Hearne stood beside the man, 'naked as he was born,' 'and, notwithstanding I was all attention, I could not detect the deceit.' Of course, Hearne believes that this was mere legerdemain, and (p. 216) mentions a most suspicious circumstance. The account is amusing, and deserves the attention of Mr. Neville Maskelyne. The same conjurer had previously swallowed a cradle! Now bayonet swallowing, which he also did, is possible, though Hearne denies it (p. 217).

The real object of these preliminary feats, however performed, is, probably, to inspire *faith*, which Dr. Charcot might have done by swallowing a cradle. The Indians explain that the barrel staves apparently swallowed are merely dematerialised by 'spirits,' leaving only the forked end sticking out of the conjurer's mouth. In fact,

Hearne caught the conjurer in the act of making a separate forked end.

Faith being thus inspired, the conjurer, for three entire days, blew, sang, and danced round 'the poor paralytic,' fasting. 'And it is truly wonderful, though the strictest truth, that when the poor man was taken from the conjuring house . . . he was able to move all the fingers and toes of the side that had been so long dead. . . . At the end of six weeks he went a-hunting for his family' (p. 219). Hearne kept up his acquaintance, and adds, what is very curious, that he developed almost a secondary personality. 'Before that dreadful paralytic stroke, he had been distinguished for his good nature and benevolent disposition, was entirely free from every appearance of avarice, . . . but after this event he was the most fractious, quarrelsome, discontented, and covetous wretch alive' (p. 220).

Dr. Charcot, if he had been acquainted with this case, would probably have said that it 'is of the nature of those which Professor Russell Reynolds has classified under the head of "paralysis dependent on idea."<sup>1</sup> Unluckily, Hearne does not tell us how his hunter, an untutored Indian, became 'paralysed by idea.'

Dr. Charcot adds: 'In every case, science is a foe to systematic negation, which the morrow may cause to melt away in the light of its new triumphs.' The present 'new triumph' is a mere coincidence with the dicta of our Lord, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole. . . . I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.' There are cures, as there are maladies, caused 'by idea.' So, in fact, we had always understood. But the point is that science, wherever it agrees with David Hume, is not a foe, but a friend to 'systematic negation.'

A parallel case of a 'miracle,' the stigmata of St. Francis, was, of course, regarded by science as a fable or a fraud. But, now that blisters and other lesions can be produced by suggestion, the fable has become a probable

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Russell Reynolds's paper in *British Medical Journal*, November 1869,

fact, and, therefore, not a miracle at all.<sup>1</sup> Mr. James remarks: 'As so often happens, a fact is denied till a welcome interpretation comes with it. Then it is admitted readily enough, and evidence quite insufficient to back a claim, so long as the Church had an interest in making it, proves to be quite sufficient for modern scientific enlightenment the moment it appears that a reputed saint can thereby be claimed as a case of "hystero-epilepsy."'<sup>2</sup>

But the Church continues to have an interest in the matter. As the class of facts which Hume declined to examine begins to be gradually admitted by science, the thing becomes clear. The evidence which could safely convey these now admittedly possible facts, say from the time of Christ, is so far proved to be not necessarily mythical—proved to be not incapable of carrying statements probably correct, which once seemed absolutely false. If so, where, precisely, ends its power of carrying facts? Thus considered, the kinds of marvellous events recorded in the Gospels, for example, are no longer to be dismissed on *a priori* grounds as 'mythical.' We cannot now discard evidence as necessarily false because it clashes with our present ideas of the possible, when we have to acknowledge that the very same evidence may safely convey to us facts which clashed with our fathers' notions of what is possible, but which are now accepted. Our notions of the possible cease to be a criterion of truth or falsehood, and our contempt for the Gospels as myths must slowly die, as 'miracle' after 'miracle' is brought within the realm of acknowledged law. With each such admission the hypothesis that the Gospel evidence is mythical must grow weaker, and weaker must grow the negative certainty of popular science.

The occurrences which took place at and near the tomb of Paris were attested, as Hume truly avers, by a great body of excellent evidence. But the wisdom which

<sup>1</sup> James, *Principles of Psychology*, ii. 612. Charcot, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> I do not need to be told that Dr. Maudsley denied the fact in 1886. I am prepared with the evidence, if it is asked for by some savant who happens not to know it.

declined to make a judicial examination has deprived us of the best kind of record. Analogous if not exactly similar events now confessedly take place, and are no longer looked upon as miraculous. But as long as they were held to be miraculous, not to examine the evidence, said Hume, was the policy of 'all reasonable people.' The result was to deprive Science of the best sort of record of facts which she welcomes as soon as she thinks she can explain them.<sup>1</sup> Examples of the folly of a *priori* negation are common. The British Association refused to hear the essay which Braid, the inventor of the word 'hypnotism,' had written upon the subject. Braid, Elliotson, and other English inquirers of the mid-century, were subjected to such persecutions as official science could inflict. We read of M. Deslon, a disciple of Mesmer, about 1783, that he was 'condemned by the Faculty of Medicine, without any examination of the facts.' The Inquisition proceeded more fairly than these scientific obscurantists.

Another curious example may be cited. M. Guyau, in his work 'The Non-Religion of the Future,' argues that Religion is doomed. 'Poetic genius has withdrawn its services,' witness Tennyson and Browning! 'Among orthodox Protestant nations miracles do not happen.'<sup>2</sup> But 'marvellous facts' *do* happen.<sup>3</sup> These 'marvellous facts,' accepted by M. Guyau, are what Hume called 'miracles,' and advised the 'wise and learned' to laugh at, without examination. They were not facts, and could not be, he said. Now to M. Guyau's mind they *are* facts, and therefore are not miracles. He includes 'mental suggestion taking place even at a distance.' A man 'can transmit an almost compulsive command, it appears nowadays, by a simple tension of his will.' If this be so, if 'will' can affect matter from a distance, obviously the

<sup>1</sup> I am not responsible, of course, for the scientific validity of Dr. Charcot's theory of healing 'by idea.' My point merely is that certain experts of no slight experience or mean reputation do now admit, as important certainties within their personal knowledge, exactly the phenomena which Hume asks the wise and learned to laugh at, indeed, but never to investigate.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 353-355.

<sup>3</sup> P. 93.



relations of will and matter are not what popular science tells us that they are. Again, if this truth is now established, and won from that region which Hume and popular science forbid us to investigate, who knows what other facts may be redeemed from that limbo, or how far they may affect our views of possibilities? The admission of mental action, operative *à distance*, is, of course, personal only to M. Guyau, among friends of the new negative tradition.

We return to Hume. He next argues that the pleasures of wonder make all accounts of 'miracles' worthless. He has just given an example of the equivalent pleasures of dogmatic disbelief. Then Religion is a disturbing force; but so, manifestly, is irreligion. 'The wise and learned are content to deride the absurdity, without informing themselves of the particular facts.' The wise and learned are applauded for their scientific attitude. Again, miracles destroy each other, for all religions have their miracles, but all religions cannot be true. This argument is no longer of force with people who look on 'miracles' as = 'X phenomena,' not as divine evidences to the truth of this or that creed. 'The gazing populace receives, without examination, whatever soothes superstition,' and Hume's whole purpose is to make the wise and learned imitate the gazing populace by rejecting alleged facts 'without examination.' The populace investigated more than did the wise and learned.

Hume has an alternative definition of a miracle—'a miracle is a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent.' We reply that what Hume calls a 'miracle' may result from the operation of some as yet unascertained law of nature (say self-suggestion), and that our business, at present, is to examine such events, not to account for them.

It may fairly be said that Hume is arguing against men who wished to make so-called 'miracles' a test of the truth of Jansenism, for example, and that he could not be expected to answer, by anticipation, ideas not current in his day. But he remains guilty of denouncing

the investigation of apparent facts. No attitude can be less scientific than his, or more common among many men of science.

According to the humorous wont of things in this world, the whole question of the marvellous had no sooner been settled for ever by David Hume than it was reopened by Emanuel Swedenborg. Now, Kant was familiar with certain of the works of Hume, whether he had read his 'Essay on Miracles' or not. Far from declining to examine the portentous 'visions' of Swedenborg, Kant interested himself deeply in the topic. As early as 1758 he wrote his first remarks on the seer, containing some reports of stories or legends about Swedenborg's 'clairvoyance.' In the true spirit of psychical research, Kant wrote a letter to Swedenborg, asking for information at first hand. The seer got the letter, but he never answered it. Kant, however, prints one or two examples of Swedenborg's successes. Madame Harteville, widow of the Dutch envoy in Stockholm, was dunned by a silversmith for a debt of her late husband's. She believed that it had been paid, but could not find the receipt. She therefore asked Swedenborg to use his renowned gifts. He promised to see what he could do, and, three days later, arrived at the lady's house while she was giving a tea, or rather a coffee, party. To the assembled society Swedenborg remarked, 'in a cold-blooded way, that he had seen her man, and spoken to him.' The late M. Harteville declared to Swedenborg that he had paid the bill, seven months before his decease: the receipt was in a cupboard upstairs. Madame Harteville replied that the cupboard had been thoroughly searched to no purpose. Swedenborg answered that, as he learned from the ghost, there was a secret drawer behind the side-plank within the cupboard. The drawer contained diplomatic correspondence, and the missing receipt. The whole company then went upstairs, found the secret drawer, and the receipt among the other papers. Kant adds Swedenborg's clairvoyant vision, from Gothenburg, of a great fire at Stockholm (dated September 1756). Kant pined to see Swedenborg himself, and

waited eagerly for his book, 'Arcana Coelestia.' At last he obtained this work, at the ransom, ruinous to Kant at that time, of 7*l*. But he was disappointed with what he read, and in 'Träume eines Geistersehers,' made a somewhat sarcastic attempt at a metaphysical theory of apparitions.

'Velut ægri somnia vanæ  
Finguntur species'

is his motto.

Kant's real position about all these matters is, I venture to say, almost identical with that of Sir Walter Scott. A Scot himself, by descent, Kant may have heard tales of second-sight and bogles. Like Scott, he dearly loved a ghost-story; like Scott he was canny enough to laugh, publicly, at them and at himself for his interest in them. Yet both would take trouble to inquire. As Kant vainly wrote to Swedenborg and others—as he vainly spent 7*l*. on 'Arcana Coelestia,' so Sir Walter was anxious to go to Egypt to examine the facts of ink-gazing clairvoyance. Kant confesses that each individual ghost-story found him sceptical, whereas the cumulative mass made a considerable impression.<sup>1</sup>

The first seventy pages of the 'Träume' are devoted to a perfectly serious discussion of the metaphysics of 'Spirits.' On page 73 he pleasantly remarks, 'Now we shall understand that all said hitherto is superfluous,' and he will not reproach the reader who regards seers *not* as citizens of two worlds (Plotinus), but as candidates for Bedlam.

Kant's irony is peculiarly Scottish. He does not himself know how far he is in earnest, and, to save his self-respect and character for canniness, he 'jocks wi' deeficulty.' He amuses himself with trying how far he can carry speculations on metaphysics (not yet reformed by himself) into the realm of the ghostly. He makes admissions about his own tendency to think that he has an immaterial soul, and that these points are, or may be, or some day will be, scientifically solved. These admis-

<sup>1</sup> *Träume*, p. 76.

sions are eagerly welcomed by Du Prel in his 'Philosophy of Mysticism;' but they are only part of Kant's joke, and how far they are serious, Kant himself does not know. If spiritualists knew their own business, they would translate and publish Kant's first seventy pages of 'Träume.' Something like telepathy, action of spirit, even disincarnate, on spirit, is alluded to, but the idea is as old as Lavaterus at least (p. 52). Kant has a good deal to say, like Scott in his 'Demonology,' on the physics of Hallucination, but it is antiquated matter. He thinks the whole topic of spiritual being only important as bearing on hopes of a future life. As speculation, all is 'in the air,' and as in such matters the learned and unlearned are on a level of ignorance, science will not discuss them. He then repeats the Swedenborg stories, and thinks it would be useful to posterity if some one would investigate them while witnesses are alive and memories are fresh.

In fact, Kant asks for psychical research.

As for Swedenborg's so costly book, Kant laughs at it. There is in it no evidence, only assertion. Kant ends, having pleased nobody, he says, and as ignorant as when he began, by citing *cultivons notre jardin*.

Kant returned to the theme in 'Anthropologische Didaktik.' He discusses the unconscious, or sub-conscious, which, till Sir William Hamilton lectured, seems to have been an absolutely unknown topic to British psychologists. 'So ist das Feld dunkler Vorstellungen das grösste in Menschen.' He has a chapter on 'The Divining Faculty' (pp. 89-93). He will not hear of presentiments, and, unlike Hegel, he scouts the Highland second-sight. The 'possessed' of anthropology are epileptic patients. Mystics (Swedenborg) are victims of *Schwärmerei*.

This reference to Swedenborg is remarked upon by Schubert in his preface to the essay of Kant. He points out that 'it is interesting to compare the circumspection, the almost uncertainty of Kant when he had to deliver a judgment on the phenomena described by himself and as to which he had made inquiry [*i.e.* in his letter *re* Swedenborg to Mlle. de Knobloch], and the very decided opinions

he expressed forty years later on Swedenborg and his companions' [in the work cited, sections 35-37. The opinion in paragraph 35 is a general one as to mystics. There is no other mention of Swedenborg].

On the whole Kant is interested, but despairing. He wants facts, and no facts are given to him but the book of the Prophet Emanuel. But, as it happened, a new, or a revived, order of facts was just about to solicit scientific attention. Kant had (1766) heard rumours of healing by magnetism, and of the alleged effect of the magnet on the human frame. The subject was in the air, and had already won the attention of Mesmer, about whom Kant had information. It were superfluous to tell again the familiar story of Mesmer's performances at Paris. While Mesmer's theory of 'magnetism' was denounced by contemporary science, the discovery of the hypnotic sleep was made by his pupil, Puységur. This gentleman was persuaded that instances of 'thought-transference' (not through known channels of sense) occurred between the patient and the magnetiser, and he also believed that he had witnessed cases of 'clairvoyance,' 'lucidity,' *vue à distance*, in which the patient apparently beheld places and events remote in space. These things would now be explained by 'unconscious suggestion' in the more sceptical schools of psychological science. The Revolution interrupted scientific study in France to a great degree, but 'somnambulism' (the hypnotic sleep) and 'magnetism' were eagerly examined in Germany. Modern manuals, for some reason, are apt to overlook these German researches and speculations. (Compare Mr. Vincent's 'Elements of Hypnotism,' p. 34.) The Schellings were interested; Ritter thought he had detected a new force, 'Siderism.' Mr. Wallace, in his preface to Hegel's 'Philosophie des Geistes,' speaks as if Ritter had made experiments in telepathy. He may have done so, but his 'Siderismus' (Tübingen, 1808) is a Report undertaken for the Academy of Munich, on the doings of an Italian water-finder, or 'dowser.' Ritter gives details of seventy-four experiments in 'dowsing' for water, metals, or coal. He believes in the faculty, but

not in 'psychic' explanations, or the Devil. He talks about 'electricity' (pp. 170, 190). He describes his precautions to avoid vulgar fraud, but he took no precautions against unconscious thought-transference. He reckoned the faculty 'temperamental' and useful.

Amoretti, at Milan, examined hundreds of cases of the so-called Divining Rod, and Jung Stilling became an early spiritualist and 'full-welling fountain head' of ghost stories.

Probably the most important philosophical result of the early German researches into the hypnotic slumber is to be found in the writings of Hegel. Owing to his peculiar use of a terminology, or scientific language, all his own, it is extremely difficult to make Hegel's meaning even moderately clear. Perhaps we may partly elucidate it by a similitude of Mr. Frederic Myers. Suppose we compare the ordinary everyday consciousness of each of us to a *spectrum*, whose ends towards each extremity fade out of our view.

Beyond the range of sight there may be imagined a lower or physiological end: for our ordinary consciousness, of course, is unaware of many physiological processes which are eternally going on within us. Digestion, so long as it is healthy, is an obvious example. But hypnotic experiment makes it certain that a patient, in the *hypnotic* condition, can consciously, or at least purposefully, affect physiological processes to which the *ordinary* consciousness is blind—for example, by raising a blister, when it is suggested that a blister must be raised. Again (granting the facts hypothetically and merely for the sake of argument), at the *upper* end of the spectrum, beyond the view of ordinary everyday consciousness, knowledge may be acquired of things which are out of the view of the consciousness of every day. For example (for the sake of argument let us admit it), unknown and remote people and places may be seen and described by clairvoyance, or *vue à distance*.

Now Hegel accepted as genuine the facts which we here adduce merely for the sake of argument, and by way of illustrations. But he did not regard the clairvoyant consciousness (or whatever we call it) which, *ex hypothesi*,

is untrammelled by space, or even by time, as occupying what we style the *upper* end of the psychical spectrum. On the contrary, he placed it at the *lower* end. Hegel's upper end 'loses itself in light;' the lower end, *qui voit tant de choses*, as La Fontaine's shepherd says, is not 'a sublime mental phase, and capable of conveying general truths.' Time and space do not thwart the consciousness at Hegel's *lower* end, which springs from 'the great soul of nature.' But that lower end, though it may see for Jeanne d'Arc at Valcouleurs a battle at Rouvray, a hundred leagues away, does not communicate any lofty philosophic truths.<sup>1</sup> The phenomena of clairvoyance, in Hegel's opinion, merely indicate that the 'material' is really 'ideal,' which, perhaps, is as much as we can ask from them. 'The somnambulist and clairvoyant see without eyes, and carry their visions directly into regions where the waking consciousness of orderly intelligence cannot enter' (Wallace). Hegel admits, however, that 'in ordinary self-possessed conscious life' there are traces of the 'magic tie,' 'especially between female friends of delicate nerves,' to whom he adds husband and wife, and members of the same family. He gives (without date or source) a case of a girl in Germany who saw her brother lying dead in a hospital at Valladolid. Her brother was at the time in the hospital, but it was another man in the next bed who was dead. 'It is thus impossible to make out whether what the clairvoyants really see preponderates over what they deceive themselves in.'

As long as the facts which Hegel accepted are not officially welcomed by science, it may seem superfluous to dispute as to whether they are attained by the lower or the higher stratum of our consciousness. But perhaps the question here at issue may be elucidated by some remarks of Dr. Max Dessoir. Psychology, he says, has proved that in every conception and idea an image or group of images must be present. These mental images are the recrudescence or recurrence of perceptions. We

<sup>1</sup> Hegel accepts the clairvoyance of the Pucelle.

see a tree, or a man, or a dog, and whenever we have before our minds the conception or idea of any of these things the original perception of them returns, though of course more faintly. But in Dr. Dessoir's opinion these revived mental images would reach the height of actual hallucinations (so that the man, dog, or tree would seem visibly present) if other memories and new sensations did not compete with them and check their development.

Suppose, to use Mlle. Ferrand's metaphor, a human body, living, but with all its channels of sensation hitherto unopened. Open the sense of sight to receive a flash of green colour, and close it again. Apparently, whenever the mind informing this body had the conception of green (and it could have no other) it would also have an hallucination of green, thus

‘Annihilating all that’s made,  
To a green thought in a green shade.’

Now, in sleep or hypnotic trance the competition of new sensations and other memories is removed or diminished, and therefore the idea of a man, dog, or tree once suggested to the hypnotised patient, does become an actual hallucination. The hypnotised patient sees the absent object which he is told to see, the sleeper sees things not really present.

Our primitive state, before the enormous competition of other memories and new sensations set in, would thus be a state of hallucination. Our normal present condition, in which hallucination is checked by competing memories and new sensations, is a suppression of our original, primitive, natural tendencies. Hallucination represents ‘the main trunk of our psychical existence.’<sup>1</sup> In Dr. Dessoir's theory this condition of hallucination is man's original and most primitive condition, but it is not a *higher*, rather a lower state of spiritual activity than the everyday practical unhallucinated consciousness.

This is also the opinion of Hegel, who supposes

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Dessoir, in *Das Doppel Ich*, as quoted by Mr. Myers, *Proceedings*, vol. vi. 213.



our primitive mental condition to be capable of descrying objects remote in space and time. Mr. Myers, as we saw, is of the opposite opinion, as to the relative dignity and relative reality of the present everyday self, and the old original fundamental Self. Dr. Dessoir refrains from pronouncing a decided opinion as to whether the original, primitive, hallucinated self within us does 'preside over powers and actions at a distance,' such as clairvoyance; but he believes in hypnotisation at a distance. His theory, like Hegel's, is that of 'atavism,' or 'throwing back' to some very remote ancestral condition. This will prove of interest later.

Hegel, at all events, believed in the fact of clairvoyance (though deeming it of little practical use); he accepted telepathy ('the magic tie'); he accepted interchange of sensations between the hypnotiser and the hypnotised; he believed in the divining rod, and, unlike Kant, even in 'Scottish second-sight.' 'The intuitive soul oversteps the conditions of time and space; it beholds things remote, things long past, and things to come.'<sup>1</sup>

The pendulum of thought has swung back a long way from the point whither it was urged by David Hume. Hegel remarks: 'The facts, it might seem, first of all call for verification. But such verification would be superfluous to those on whose account it was called for, since they facilitate the inquiry for themselves by declaring the narratives, infinitely numerous though they be, and accredited by the education and character of the witnesses, to be mere deception and imposture. Their *a priori* conceptions are so rooted that no testimony can avail against them, and they have even denied what they have seen with their own eyes,' and reported under their own hands, like Sir David Brewster. Hegel, it will be observed, takes the facts as given, and works them into his general theory of the Sensitive Soul (*fühlende Seele*). He does not try to establish the facts; but to establish, or

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophie des Geistes*, Werke, vol. vii. 179. Berlin, 1845. The examples and much of the philosophising are in the *Zusätze*, not translated in Mr. Wallace's version, Oxford, 1894.

at least to examine them, is the first business of Psychological Research. Theorising comes later.

The years which have passed between the date of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Mind' and our own time have witnessed the long dispute over the existence, the nature, and the causes of the hypnotic condition, and over the reality and limitations of the phenomena. Thus the Academy of Medicine in Paris appointed a Committee to examine the subject in 1825. The Report on 'Animal Magnetism,' as it was then styled, was presented in 1831. The Academy lacked the courage to publish it, for the Report was favourable even to certain of the still disputed phenomena. At that time, in accordance with a survival of the theory of Mesmer, the agent in hypnotic cases was believed to be a kind of efflux of a cosmic fluid from the 'magnetiser' to the patient. There was 'a magnetic connection.'

Though no distinction between mesmerism and hypnotism is taken in popular language, 'mesmerism' is a word implying this theory of 'magnetic' or other unknown personal influence. 'Hypnotism,' as will presently be seen, implies no such theory. The Academy's Report (1831) attested the development, under 'magnetism,' of 'new faculties,' such as clairvoyance and intuition, also the production of 'great changes in the physical economy,' such as insensibility, and sudden increase of strength. The Report declared it to be 'demonstrated' that sleep could be produced 'without suggestion,' as we say now, though the term was not then in use. 'Sleep has been produced in circumstances in which the persons could not see or were ignorant of the means employed to produce it.'

The Academy did its best to suppress this Report, which attests the phenomena that Hegel accepted, phenomena still disputed. Six years later (1837), a Committee reported against the pretensions of a certain Berna, a 'magnetiser.' No person acted on both Committees, and this Report was accepted. Later, a number of people tried to read a letter in a box, and failed. 'This,' says Mr. Vincent, 'settled

the question with regard to clairvoyance;' though it might be more logical to say that it settled the pretensions of the competitors on that occasion. The Academy now decided that, because certain persons did not satisfy the expectations raised by their preliminary advertisements, therefore the question of magnetism was definitely closed.

We have often to regret that scientific eminence is not always accompanied by scientific logic. Where science neglects a subject, charlatans and dupes take it up. In England 'animal magnetism' had been abandoned to this class of enthusiasts, till Thackeray's friend, Dr. Elliotson, devoted himself to the topic. He was persecuted as doctors know how to persecute; but in 1841, Braid, of Manchester, discovered that the so-called 'magnetic sleep' could be produced without any 'magnetism.' He made his patients stare fixedly at an object, and encouraged them to expect to go to sleep. He called his method 'Hypnotism,' a term which begs no question. Seeming to cease to be mysterious, hypnotism became all but respectable, and was being used in surgical operations, till it was superseded by chloroform. In England, the study has been, and remains, rather *suspect*, while on the Continent hypnotism is used both for healing purposes and in the inquiries of experimental psychology. Wide differences of opinion still exist, as to the nature of the hypnotic sleep, as to its physiological concomitants, and as to the limits of the faculties exercised in or out of the slumber. It is not even absolutely certain that the exercise of the stranger faculties—for instance, that the production of anæsthesia and rigidity—are the results merely of 'suggestion' and expectancy. A hypnotised patient is told that the middle finger of his left hand will become rigid and incapable of sensation. This occurs, and is explained by 'suggestion,' though *how* 'suggestion' produces the astonishing effect is another problem. The late Mr. Gurney, however, made a number of experiments in which no suggestion was pronounced, nor did the patients know which of their fingers was to become rigid and incapable of pain. The

patient's hands were thrust through a screen, on the other side of which the hypnotist made passes above the finger which was to become rigid. The lookers-on selected the finger, and the insensibility was tested by a strong electric current. The effect was also produced *without* passes, the operator merely pointing at the selected finger, and 'willing' the result. If he did not 'will' it, nothing occurred, nor did anything occur if he willed without pointing. The proximity of the operator's hand produced no effect if he did not 'will,' nor was his 'willing' successful if he did not bring his hand near that of the patient. Other people's hands, similarly situated, produced no effect.

Experiments in transferring taste, as of salt, sugar, cayenne pepper, from operator to subject, were also successful. Drs. Janet and Gibert also produced sleep in a woman at a distance, by 'willing' it, at hours which were selected by a system of drawing lots.<sup>1</sup> These facts, of course, rather point to an element of truth in the old mesmeric hypothesis of some specific influence in the operator. They cannot very well be explained by suggestion and expectancy. But these facts and facts of clairvoyance and thought-transference will be rejected as superstitious delusions by people who have not met them in their own experience. This need not prevent us from examining them, because *all* the facts, including those now universally accepted by Continental and scarcely impeached by British science, have been noisily rejected again and again on Hume's principles.

The rarer facts, as Mr. Gurney remarks, 'still go through the hollow form of taking place.' Here is an example of the mode in which these phenomena are treated by popular science. Mr. Vincent says that 'clairvoyance and phrenology were Elliotson's constant stock in trade.' (Phrenology was also Braid's stock in trade.) 'It is a matter of congratulation to have been so soon delivered from what Dr. Lloyd Tuckey has well called "a mass of superincumbent rubbish."'<sup>2</sup> Clairvoyance is

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. ii. pp. 201-207, 390-392.

<sup>2</sup> *Elements of Hypnotism*, p. 57.

part of a mass of rubbish, on page 57. On page 67, Mr. Vincent says : ' There are many interesting questions, such as telepathy, thought-reading, clairvoyance, upon which it would be perhaps rash to give any decided opinion. . . . All these strange psychical conditions present problems of great interest,' and are only omitted because ' they have not a sufficient bearing on the normal states of hypnosis. . . . ' Thus what was ' rubbish ' in one page ' presents problems of great interest ' ten pages later, and, after offering a decided opinion that clairvoyance is rubbish, Mr. Vincent thinks it rash to give any decided opinion. It is rather rash to give a decided opinion, and then to say that it is rash to do so.<sup>1</sup>

This brief sketch shows that science is confronted by certain facts, which, in his time, Hume dismissed as incredible miracles, beneath the contempt of the wise and learned. We also see that the stranger and rarer phenomena which Hegel accepted as facts, and interwove with his general philosophy, are still matters of dispute. Admitted by some men of science, they are doubted by others ; by others, again, are denied, while most of the journalists and authors of cheap primers, who inspire popular tradition, regard the phenomena as frauds or fables of superstition. But it is plain that these phenomena, like the more ordinary facts of hypnotism, *may* finally be admitted by science. The scientific world laughed, not so long ago, at Ogham inscriptions, meteorites, and at palæolithic weapons as impostures, or freaks of nature. Now nobody has any doubt on these matters, and clairvoyance, thought-transference, and telepathy may, not inconceivably, be as fortunate in the long run as meteorites, or as the more usual phenomena of hypnotism.

It is only Lord Kelvin who now maintains, or lately maintained, that in hypnotism there is nothing at all but fraud and malobservation. In years to come it may be that

<sup>1</sup> Possibly Mr. Vincent only means that Elliotson's experiments, ' little more than sober fooling ' (p. 57), with the sisters Okey, were rubbish. But whether the sisters Okey were or were not honest is a question on which we cannot enter here.

only some similar belated voice will cry that in thought-transference there is nothing but malobservation and fraud. At present the serious attention and careful experiment needed for the establishment of the facts are more common among French than among English men of science. When published, these experiments, if they contain any affirmative instances, are denounced as 'superstitious,' or criticised after what we must charitably deem to be a very hasty glance, by the guides of popular opinion. Examples of this method will be later quoted. Meanwhile the disputes as to these alleged facts are noticed here, because of their supposed relation to the Origin of Religion.

## III

## ANTHROPOLOGY AND RELIGION

AMONG the various forms of science which are reaching and affecting the new popular tradition, we have reckoned Anthropology. Pleasantly enough, Anthropology has herself but recently emerged from that limbo of the unrecognised in which Psychical Research is pining. The British Association used to reject anthropological papers as 'vain dreams based on travellers' tales.' No doubt the British Association would reject a paper on clairvoyance as a vain dream based on old wives' fables, or on hysterical imposture. Undeniably the study of such themes is hampered by fable and fraud, just as anthropology has to be ceaselessly on its guard against 'travellers' tales,' against European misunderstandings of savage ideas, and against civilised notions and scientific theories unconsciously read into barbaric customs, rites, traditions, and usages. Man, *ondoyant et divers*, is the subject alike of anthropology and of psychical research. Man (especially savage man) cannot be secluded from disturbing influences, and watched, like the materials of a chemical experiment in a laboratory. Nor can man be caught in a 'primitive' state: his intellectual beginnings lie very far behind the stage of culture in which we find the lowest known races. Consequently the matter on which anthropology works is fluctuating; the evidence on which it rests needs the most sceptical criticism, and many of its conclusions, in the necessary absence of historical testimony as to times far behind the lowest known savages, must be hypothetical.

For these sound reasons official science long looked askance on Anthropology. Her followers were not regarded as genuine scholars, and, perhaps as a result of this contempt, they were often 'broken men,' intellectual outlaws, people of one wild idea. To the scientific mind, anthropologists or ethnologists were a horde who darkly muttered of serpent worship, phallus worship, Arkite doctrines, and the Ten Lost Tribes that kept turning up in the most unexpected places. Anthropologists were said to gloat over dirty rites of dirty savages, and to seek reason where there was none. The exiled, the outcast, the pariah of Science, is, indeed, apt to find himself in odd company. Round the camp-fire of Psychical Research too, in the unofficial, unstaked waste of Science, hover odd, menacing figures of Esoteric Buddhists, *Satanistes*, Occultists, Christian Scientists, Spiritualists, and Astrologers, as the Arkites and Lost Tribesmen haunted the cradle of anthropology.

But there was found at last to be reason in the thing, and method in the madness. Evolution was in it. The acceptance, after long ridicule, of palæolithic weapons as relics of human culture, probably helped to bring Anthropology within the sacred circle of permitted knowledge. Her topic was full of illustrations of the doctrine of Mr. Darwin. Modern writers on the theme had been anticipated by the less systematic students of the eighteenth century—Goguet, de Brosses, Millar, Fontenelle, Lafitau, Boulanger, or even Hume and Voltaire. As pioneers these writers answer to the early mesmerists and magnetists, Puysegur, Amoretti, Ritter, Elliotson, Mayo, Gregory, in the history of Psychical Research. They were on the same track, in each case, as Lubbock, Tylor, Spencer, Bastian, and Frazer, or as Gurney, Richet, Myers, Janet, Dessoir, and Von Schrenck-Notzing. But the earlier students were less careful of method and evidence.

Evidence! that was the stumbling block of anthropology. We still hear, in the later works of Mr. Max Müller, the echo of the old complaints. Anything you



please, Mr. Max Müller says, you may find among your useful savages, and (in regard to some anthropologists) his criticism is just. You have but to skim a few books of travel, pencil in hand, and pick out what suits your case. Suppose, as regards our present theme, your theory is that savages possess broken lights of the belief in a Supreme Being. You can find evidence for that. Or suppose you want to show that they have no religious ideas at all; you can find evidence for that also. Your testimony is often derived from observers ignorant of the language of the people whom they talk about, or who are themselves prejudiced by one or other theory or bias. How can you pretend to raise a science on such foundations, especially as the savage informants wish to please or to mystify inquirers, or they answer at random, or deliberately conceal their most sacred institutions, or have never paid any attention to the subject?

To all these perfectly natural objections Mr. Tylor has replied.<sup>1</sup> Evidence must be collected, sifted, tested, as in any other branch of inquiry. A writer, 'of course, is bound to use his best judgment as to the trustworthiness of all authors he quotes, and, if possible, to obtain several accounts to certify each point in each locality.' Mr. Tylor then adduces 'the test of recurrence,' of undesigned coincidence in testimony, as Millar had already argued in the last century.<sup>2</sup> If a mediæval Mahommedan in Tartary, a Jesuit in Brazil, a Wesleyan in Fiji, one may add a police magistrate in Australia, a Presbyterian in Central Africa, a trapper in Canada, agree in describing some analogous rite or myth in these diverse lands and ages, we cannot set down the coincidence to chance or fraud. 'Now, the most important facts of ethnography are vouched for in this way.'

We may add that even when the ideas of savages are obscure, we can often detect them by analysis of the institutions in which they are expressed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Origin of Races*.

<sup>3</sup> I may be permitted to refer to 'Reply to Objections' in the appendix to my *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, vol. ii.

Thus anthropological, like psychical or any other evidence, must be submitted to conscientious processes of testing and sifting. Contradictory instances must be hunted for sedulously. Nothing can be less scientific than to snatch up any traveller's tale which makes for our theory, and to ignore evidence, perhaps earlier, or later, or better observed, which makes against it. Yet this, unfortunately, in certain instances (which will be adduced) has been the occasional error of Mr. Huxley and Mr. Spencer.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Spencer opens his 'Ecclesiastical Institutions' by the remark that 'the implication [from the reported absence of the ideas of belief in persons born deaf and dumb] is that the religious ideas of civilised men are not innate' (who says they are?), and this implication Mr. Spencer supports by 'proofs that among various savages religious ideas do not exist.' 'Sir John Lubbock has given many of these.' But it would be well to advise the reader to consult Roskoff's confutation of Sir John Lubbock, and Mr. Tylor's masterly statement.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Spencer cited Sir Samuel Baker for savages without even 'a ray of superstition' or a trace of worship. Mr. Tylor, twelve years before Mr. Spencer wrote, had demolished Sir Samuel Baker's assertion,<sup>3</sup> as regards many tribes, and so shaken it as regards the Latukas, quoted by Mr. Spencer. The godless Dinkas have 'a good deity and heaven-dwelling creator,' carefully recorded years before Sir Samuel's 'rash denial.' We show later that Mr. Spencer, relying on a single isolated sentence in Brough Smyth, omits all his essential information about the Australian Supreme Being; while Mr. Huxley—overlooking the copious and conclusive evidence as to their ethical religion—charges the Australians with having merely a non-moral belief in casual spirits. We have also to show that Mr. Huxley, under the dominance of his theory, and inadvertently, quotes a good authority as saying the precise reverse of what he really does say.

<sup>1</sup> Spencer, *Ecclesiastical Institutions*, pp. 672, 673.

<sup>2</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 417-425. Cf. however *Princip. of Sociol.* p. 304.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* i. 423, 424.

If the facts not fitting their theories are little observed by authorities so popular as Mr. Huxley and Mr. Spencer; if *instantiæ contradictoriæ* are ignored by them, or left vague; if these things are done in the green tree, we may easily imagine what shall be done in the dry. But we need not war with hasty *vulgarisateurs* and headlong theorists.

Enough has been said to show the position of anthropology as regards evidence, and to prove that, if he confines his observations to certain anthropologists, the censures of Mr. Max Müller are justified. It is mainly for this reason that the arguments presently to follow are strung on the thread of Mr. Tylor's truly learned and accurate book, 'Primitive Culture.'

Though but recently crept forth, *vix aut ne vix quidem*, from the chill shade of scientific disdain, Anthropology adopts the airs of her elder sisters among the sciences, and is as severe as they to the Cinderella of the family, Psychical Research. She must murmur of her fairies among the cinders of the hearth, while they go forth to the ball, and dance with provincial mayors at the festivities of the British Association. This is ungenerous, and unfortunate, as the records of anthropology are rich in unexamined materials of psychical research. I am unacquainted with any work devoted by an anthropologist of renown to the hypnotic and kindred practices of the lower races, except Herr Bastian's very meagre tract, 'Über psychische Beobachtungen bei Naturvölkern.'<sup>1</sup> We possess, none the less, a mass of scattered information on this topic, the savage side of psychical phenomena, in works of travel, and in Mr. Tylor's monumental 'Primitive Culture.' Mr. Tylor, however, as we shall see, regards it as a matter of indifference, or, at least, as a matter beyond the scope of his essay, to decide whether the parallel supernormal phenomena believed in by savages, and said to recur in civilisation, are facts of actual experience, or not.

Now, this question is not otiose. Mr. Tylor, like other anthropologists, Mr. Huxley, Mr. Herbert Spencer,

<sup>1</sup> Published for the Berlin Society of Experimental Psychology, Günther, Leipzig, 1890.

and their followers and popularisers, constructs, on anthropological grounds, a theory of the Origin of Religion. That origin anthropology explains as the result of early and fallacious reasonings on a number of biological and psychological phenomena, both normal and (as is alleged by savages) supernormal. These reasonings led to the belief in souls and spirits. Now, first, anthropology has taken for granted that the Supreme Deities of savages are envisaged by them as 'spirits.' This, paradoxical as the statement may appear, is just what does not seem to be proved, as we shall show. Next, if the supernormal phenomena (clairvoyance, thought-transference, phantasms of the dead, phantasms of the dying, and others) be real matters of experience, the inferences drawn from them by early savage philosophy may be, in some degree, erroneous. But the inferences drawn by materialists who reject the supernormal phenomena will also, perhaps, be, let us say, incomplete. Religion will have been, in part, developed out of facts, perhaps inconsistent with materialism in its present dogmatic form. To put it less trenchantly, and perhaps more accurately, the alleged facts 'are not merely dramatically strange, they are not merely extraordinary and striking, but they are "odd" in the sense that they will not easily fit in with the views which physicists and men of science generally give us of the universe in which we live' (Mr. A. J. Balfour, President's Address, 'Proceedings,' S.P.R. vol. x. p. 8, 1894).

As this is the case, it might seem to be the business of Anthropology, the Science of Man, to examine, among other things, the evidence for the actual existence of those alleged unusual and supernormal phenomena, belief in which is given as one of the origins of religion.

To make this examination, in the ethnographic field, is almost a new labour. As we shall see, anthropologists have not hitherto investigated such things as the 'Fire-walk' of savages, uninjured in the flames, like the Three Holy Children. The world-wide savage practice of divining by hallucinations induced through gazing into a smooth deep (crystal-gazing) has been studied, I think, by

no anthropologist. The veracity of 'messages' uttered by savage seers when (as they suppose) 'possessed' or 'inspired' has not been criticised, and probably cannot be, for lack of detailed information. The 'physical phenomena' which answer among savages to the use of the 'divining rod,' and to 'spiritist' marvels in modern times, have only been glanced at. In short, all the savage parallels to the so-called 'psychical phenomena' now under discussion in England, America, Germany, Italy, and France, have escaped critical analysis and comparison with their civilised counterparts.

An exception among anthropologists is Mr. Tylor. He has not suppressed the existence of these barbaric parallels to our modern problems of this kind. But his interest in them practically ends when he has shown that the phenomena helped to originate the savage belief in 'spirits,' and when he has displayed the 'survival' of that belief in later culture. He does not ask 'Are the phenomena real?' he is concerned only with the savage philosophy of the phenomena and with its relics in modern spiritism and religion. My purpose is to do, by way only of *ébauche*, what neither anthropology nor psychical research nor psychology has done: to put the savage and modern phenomena side by side. Such evidence as we can give for the actuality of the modern experiences will, so far as it goes, raise a presumption that the savage beliefs, however erroneous, however darkened by fraud and fancy, repose on a basis of real observation of actual phenomena.

Anthropology is concerned with man and what is in man—*humani nihil a se alienum putat*. These researches, therefore, are within the anthropological province, especially as they bear on the prevalent anthropological theory of the Origin of Religion. By 'religion' we mean, for the purpose of this argument, the belief in the existence of an Intelligence, or Intelligences not human, and not dependent on a material mechanism of brain and nerves, which may, or may not, powerfully control men's fortunes and the nature of things. We also mean the

additional belief that there is, in man, an element so far kindred to these Intelligences that it can transcend the knowledge obtained through the known bodily senses, and may possibly survive the death of the body. These two beliefs at present (though not necessarily in their origin) appear chiefly as the faith in God and in the Immortality of the Soul.

It is important, then, to trace, if possible, the origin of these two beliefs. If they arose in actual communion with Deity (as the first at least did, in the theory of the Hebrew Scriptures), or if they could be proved to arise in an unanalysable *sensus numinis*, or even in 'a perception of the Infinite' (Max Müller), religion would have a divine, or at least a necessary source. To the Theist, what is inevitable cannot but be divinely ordained, therefore religion is divinely preordained, therefore, in essentials, though not in accidental details, religion is true. The atheist, or non-theist, of course draws no such inferences.

But if religion, as now understood among men, be the latest evolutionary form of a series of mistakes, fallacies, and illusions, if its germ be a blunder, and its present form only the result of progressive but unessential refinements on that blunder, the inference that religion is untrue—that nothing actual corresponds to its hypothesis—is very easily drawn. The inference is not, perhaps, logical, for all our science itself is the result of progressive refinements upon hypotheses originally erroneous, fashioned to explain facts misconceived. Yet our science is true, within its limits, though very far from being exhaustive of the truth. In the same way, it might be argued, our religion, even granting that it arose out of primitive fallacies and false hypotheses, may yet have been refined, as science has been, through a multitude of causes, into an approximate truth.

Frequently as I am compelled to differ from Mr. Spencer both as to facts and their interpretation, I am happy to find that he has anticipated me here. Opponents will urge, he says, that 'if the primitive belief' (in ghosts) 'was absolutely false, all derived beliefs from it must be

absolutely false.' Mr. Spencer replies: 'A germ of truth was contained in the primitive conception—the truth, namely, that the power which manifests itself in consciousness is but a differently conditioned form of the power which manifests itself beyond consciousness.' In fact, we find Mr. Spencer, like Faust as described by Marguerite, saying much the same thing as the priests, but not quite in the same way. Of course, I allow for a much larger 'germ of truth' in the origin of the ghost theory than Mr. Spencer does. But we can both say 'the ultimate form of the religious consciousness is' (will be?) 'the final development of a consciousness which at the outset contained a germ of truth obscured by multitudinous errors.'<sup>1</sup>

'One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.'

Coming at last to Mr. Tylor, we find that he begins by dismissing the idea that any known race of men is devoid of religious conceptions. He disproves, out of their own mouths, the allegations of several writers who have made this exploded assertion about 'godless tribes.' He says: 'The thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far præ-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilisation, *perhaps even of human existence*.'<sup>2</sup> So far we abound in Mr. Tylor's sense. 'As a minimum definition of religion' he gives 'the belief in spiritual beings,' which appears 'among all low races with whom we have attained to thoroughly intimate relations.' The existence of this belief at present does not prove that no races were ever, at any time, destitute of all belief. But it prevents us from positing the existence of such creedless races, in any age, as a demonstrated fact. We have thus, in short, no opportunity of observing, *historically*, man's development from blank unbelief into even the minimum or most rudi-

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical Institutions*, 887-889.

<sup>2</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 421, chapter xi.

mentary form of belief. We can only theorise and make more or less plausible conjectures as to the first rudiments of human faith in God and in spiritual beings. We find no race whose mind, as to faith, is a *tabula rasa*.

To the earliest faith Mr. Tylor gives the name of *Animism*, a term not wholly free from objection, though 'Spiritualism' is still less desirable, having been usurped by a form of modern superstitiousness. This Animism, 'in its full development, includes the belief in souls and in a future state, in controlling deities and subordinate spirits.' In Mr. Tylor's opinion, as in Mr. Huxley's, Animism, in its lower (and earlier) forms, has scarcely any connection with ethics. Its 'spirits' do not 'make for righteousness.' This is a side issue to be examined later, but we may provisionally observe, in passing, that the ethical ideas, such as they are, even of Australian blacks are reported to be inculcated at the religious mysteries (*Bora*) of the tribes, which were instituted by and are performed in honour of the gods of their native belief. But this topic must be reserved for our closing chapters.

Mr. Tylor, however, is chiefly concerned with Animism as 'an ancient and world-wide philosophy, of which belief is the theory, and worship is the practice.' Given Animism, then, or the belief in spiritual beings, as the earliest form and minimum of religious faith, what is the origin of Animism? It will be seen that, by Animism, Mr. Tylor does not mean the alleged early theory, implicitly if not explicitly and consciously held, that all things whatsoever are animated and are personalities.<sup>1</sup> Judging from the behaviour of little children, and from the myths of savages, early man may have half-consciously extended his own sense of personal and potent and animated existence to the whole of nature as known to him. Not only animals, but vegetables and inorganic objects, may have been looked on by him as persons, like what he felt himself to be. The child (perhaps merely because *taught*

<sup>1</sup> This theory is what Mr. Spencer calls 'Animism,' and does not believe in. What Mr. Tylor calls 'Animism' Mr. Spencer believes in, but he calls it the 'Ghost Theory.'



to do so) beats the naughty chair, and all objects are persons in early mythology. But this *feeling*, rather than theory, may conceivably have existed among early men, before they developed the hypothesis of 'spirits,' 'ghosts,' or souls. It is the origin of *that* hypothesis, 'Animism,' which Mr. Tylor investigates.

What, then, is the origin of Animism? It arose in the earliest traceable speculations on 'two groups of biological problems.'

(1) 'What is it that makes the difference between a living body and a dead one; what causes waking, sleep, trance, disease, and death?'

(2) 'What are those human shapes which appear in dreams and visions?'

Here it should be noted that Mr. Tylor most properly takes a distinction between sleeping 'dreams' and waking 'visions,' or 'clear vision.' The distinction is made even by the blacks of Australia. Thus one of the Kurnai announced that his *Yambo*, or soul, could 'go out' during sleep, and see the distant and the dead. But 'while any one might be able to communicate with the ghosts, *during sleep*, it was only the wizards who were able to do so in waking hours.' A wizard, in fact, is a person susceptible (or feigning to be susceptible) when awake to hallucinatory perceptions of phantasms of the dead. 'Among the Kulin of Wimmera River a man became a wizard who, as a boy, had seen his mother's ghost sitting at her grave.'<sup>2</sup> These facts prove that a race of savages at the bottom of the scale of culture do take a formal distinction between normal dreams in sleep and waking hallucinations—a thing apt to be denied.

Thus Mr. Herbert Spencer offers the massive generalisation that savages do not possess a language enabling a man to say 'I dreamed that I saw,' instead of 'I saw' ('Principles of Sociology,' p. 150). This could only be proved by giving examples of such highly deficient

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 428.

<sup>2</sup> Howitt, *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, xiii. 191-195.

languages, which Mr. Spencer does not do.<sup>1</sup> In many savage speculations there occur ideas as subtly metaphysical as those of Hegel. Moreover, even the Australian languages have the verb 'to see,' and the substantive 'sleep.' Nothing, then, prevents a man from saying 'I saw in sleep' (*insomnium*, ἐνύπνιον).

We have shown too, that the Australians take an essential distinction between waking hallucinations (ghosts seen by a man when awake) and the common hallucinations of slumber. Anybody can have these; the man who sees ghosts when awake is marked out for a wizard.

At the same time the vividness of dreams among certain savages, as recorded in Mr. Im Thurn's 'Indians of Guiana,' and the consequent confusion of dreaming and waking experiences, are certain facts. Wilson says the same of some negroes, and Mr. Spencer illustrates from the confusion of mind in dreamy children. They, we know, are much more addicted to somnambulism than grown-up people. I am unaware that spontaneous somnambulism among savages has been studied as it ought to be. I have demonstrated, however, that very low savages can and do draw an essential distinction between sleeping and waking hallucinations.

Again, the crystal-gazer, whose apparently telepathic crystal pictures are discussed later (chap. v.), was introduced to a crystal just because she had previously been known to be susceptible to waking and occasionally veracious hallucinations.

It was not only on the dreams of sleep, so easily forgotten as they are, that the savage pondered, in his early speculations about the life and the soul. He included in his materials the much more striking and memorable experiences of waking hours, as we and Mr. Tylor agree in holding.

Reflecting on these things, the earliest savage reasoners

<sup>1</sup> The curious may consult, for savage words for 'dreams,' Mr. Scott's *Dictionary of the Mang'anja Language*, s.v. 'Lota,' or any glossary of any savage language.

would decide: (1) that man has a 'life' (which leaves him temporarily in sleep, finally in death); (2) that man also possesses a 'phantom' (which appears to other people in their visions and dreams). The savage philosopher would then 'combine his information,' like a celebrated writer on Chinese metaphysics. He would merely 'combine the life and the phantom,' as 'manifestations of one and the same soul.' The result would be 'an apparitional soul,' or 'ghost-soul.'

This ghost-soul would be a highly accomplished creature, 'a vapour, film, or shadow,' yet conscious, capable of leaving the body, mostly invisible and impalpable, 'yet also manifesting physical power,' existing and appearing after the death of the body, able to act on the bodies of other men, beasts, and things.<sup>1</sup>

When the earliest reasoners, in an age and in mental conditions of which we know nothing historically, had evolved the hypothesis of this conscious, powerful, separable soul, capable of surviving the death of the body, it was not difficult for them to develop the rest of Religion, as Mr. Tylor thinks. A powerful ghost of a dead man might thrive till, its original owner being long forgotten, it became a God. Again (souls once given) it would not be a very difficult logical leap, perhaps, to conceive of souls, or spirits, that had never been human at all. It is, we may say, only *le premier pas qui coûte*, the step to the belief in a surviving separable soul. Nevertheless, when we remember that Mr. Tylor is theorising about savages in the dim background of human evolution, savages whom we know nothing of by experience, savages far behind Australians and Bushmen (who possess Gods), we must admit that he credits them with great ingenuity, and strong powers of abstract reasoning. He may be right in his opinion. In the same way, just as primitive men were keen reasoners, so early bees, more clever than modern bees, may have evolved the system of hexagonal cells, and only an early fish of genius could first have hit

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* i. 429.

on the plan, now hereditary, of killing a fly by blowing water at it.

To this theory of metaphysical genius in very low savages I have no objection to offer. We shall find, later, astonishing examples of savage abstract speculation, certainly not derived from missionary sources, because wholly out of the missionary's line of duty and reflection.

As early beasts had genius, so the earliest reasoners appear to have been as logically gifted as the lowest savages now known to us, or even as some Biblical critics. By Mr. Tylor's hypothesis, they first conceived the extremely abstract idea of Life, 'that which makes the difference between a living body and a dead one.'<sup>1</sup> This highly abstract conception must have been, however, the more difficult to early man, as, to him, *all* things, universally, are 'animated.'<sup>2</sup> Mr. Tylor illustrates this theory of early man by the little child's idea that 'chairs, sticks, and wooden horses are actuated by the same sort of personal will as nurses and children and kittens. . . . In such matters the savage mind well represents the childish stage.'<sup>3</sup>

Now, nothing can be more certain than that, if children think sticks are animated, they don't think so because they have heard, or discovered, that they possess souls, and then transfer souls to sticks. We may doubt, then, if primitive man came, in this way, by reasoning on souls, to suppose that all things, universally, were animated. But if he did think *all* things animated—a corpse, to his mind, was just as much animated as anything else. Did he reason: 'All things are animated. A corpse is not animated. Therefore a corpse is not a thing (within the meaning of my General Law)'?

How, again, did early man conceive of Life, *before* he identified Life (1) with 'that which makes the difference between a living body and a dead one' (a difference which, *ex hypothesi*, he did not draw, *all* things being animated to his mind) and (2) with 'those human shapes which appear in dreams and visions'? 'The ancient

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* i. 428.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 285.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 285, 286.

savage philosophers probably reached the obvious inference that every man had two things belonging to him, a life and a phantom.' But everything was supposed to have 'a life,' as far as one makes out, before the idea of separable soul was developed, at least if savages arrived at the theory of universal animation as children are said to do.

We are dealing here quite conjecturally with facts beyond our experience.

In any case, early man excogitated (by the hypothesis) the abstract idea of Life, *before* he first 'envisaged' it in material terms as 'breath,' or 'shadow.' He next decided that mere breath or shadow was not only identical with the more abstract conception of Life, but could also take on forms as real and full-bodied as, to him, are the hallucinations of dream or waking vision. His reasoning appears to have proceeded from the more abstract (the idea of Life) to the more concrete, to the life first shadowy and vaporous, then clothed in the very aspect of the real man.

Mr. Tylor has thus (whether we follow his logic or not) provided man with a theory of active, intelligent, separable souls, which can survive the death of the body. At this theory early man arrived by speculations on the nature of life, and on the causes of phantasms of the dead or living beheld in 'dreams and visions.' But our author by no means leaves out of sight the effects of alleged supernormal phenomena believed in by savages, with their parallels in modern civilisation. These supernormal phenomena, whether real or illusory, are, he conceives, facts in that mass of experiences from which savages constructed their belief in separable, enduring, intelligent souls or ghosts, the foundation of religion.

While we are, perhaps owing to our own want of capacity, puzzled by what seem to be two kinds of early philosophy—(1) a sort of instinctive or unreasoned belief in universal animation, which Mr. Spencer calls 'Animism' and does not believe in, (2) the reasoned belief in separable and surviving souls of men (and in things), which

Mr. Spencer believes in, and Mr. Tylor calls 'Animism'—we must also note another difficulty. Mr. Tylor may seem to be taking it for granted that the earliest, remote, unknown thinkers on life and the soul were existing on the same psychical plane as we ourselves, or, at least, as modern savages. Between modern savages and ourselves, in this regard, he takes certain differences, but takes none between modern savages and the remote founders of religion.

Thus Mr. Tylor observes :

'The condition of the modern ghost-seer, whose imagination passes on such slight excitement into positive hallucination, is rather the rule than the exception among uncultured and intensely imaginative tribes, whose minds may be thrown off their balance by a touch, a word, a gesture, an unaccustomed noise.'<sup>1</sup>

I find evidence that low contemporary savages are *not* great ghost-seers, and, again, I cannot quite accept Mr. Tylor's psychology of the 'modern ghost-seer.' Most such favoured persons whom I have known were steady, unimaginative, unexcitable people, with just one odd experience. Lord Tennyson, too, after sleeping in the bed of his recently lost father on purpose to see his ghost, decided that ghosts 'are not seen by imaginative people.'

We now examine, at greater length, the psychical conditions in which, according to Mr. Tylor, contemporary savages differ from civilised men. Later we shall ask what may be said as to possible or presumable psychical differences between modern savages and the datelessly distant founders of the belief in souls. Mr. Tylor attributes to the lower races, and even to races high above their level, 'morbid ecstasy, brought on by meditation, fasting, narcotics, excitement, or disease.' Now, we may still 'meditate'—and how far the result is 'morbid' is a matter for psychologists and pathologists to determine. Fasting we do not practise voluntarily, nor would we easily accept evidence from an Englishman as to

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 446.

the veracity of voluntary fasting visions, like those of Cotton Mather. The visions of disease we should set aside, as a rule, with those of 'excitement,' produced, for instance, by 'devil-dances.' Narcotic and alcoholic visions are not in question.<sup>1</sup> For our purpose the *induced* trances of savages (in whatever way voluntarily brought on) are analogous to the modern induced hypnotic trance. Any supernormal acquisitions of knowledge in these induced conditions, among savages, would be on a par with similar alleged experiences of persons under hypnotism.

We do not differ from known savages in being able to bring on non-normal psychological conditions, but we produce these, as a rule, by other methods than theirs, and such experiments are not made on *all* of us, as they were on all Red Indian boys and girls in the 'medicine-fast,' at the age of puberty.

Further, in their normal state, known savages, or some of them, are more 'suggestible' than educated Europeans at least.<sup>2</sup> They can be more easily hallucinated in their normal waking state by suggestion. Once more, their intervals of hunger, followed by gorges of food, and their lack of artificial light, combine to make savages more apt to see what is not there than are comfortable educated white men. But Mr. Tylor goes too far when he says 'where the savage could see *phantasms*, the civilised man has come to amuse himself with fancies.'<sup>3</sup> The civilised man, beyond all doubt, is capable of being *enfantosmé*.

In all that he says on this point, the point of psychical condition, Mr. Tylor is writing about known savages as they differ from ourselves. But the savages who *ex hypothesi* evolved the doctrine of souls lie beyond our ken, far behind the modern savages, among whom we find belief not only in souls and ghosts, but in moral gods. About

<sup>1</sup> See, however, Dr. Von Schrenck-Notzing, *Die Beobachtung narcotischer Mittel für den Hypnotismus*, and S.P.R. *Proceedings*, x. 292-299.

<sup>2</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 306-315.

<sup>3</sup> i. 315.

the psychical condition of the savages who worked out the theory of souls and founded religion we necessarily know nothing. If there be such experiences as clairvoyance, telepathy, and so on, these unknown ancestors of ours may (for all that we can tell) have been peculiarly open to them, and therefore peculiarly apt to believe in separable souls. In fact, when we write about these far-off founders of religion, we guess in the dark, or by the flickering light of analogy. The lower animals have faculties (as in their power of finding their way home through new unknown regions, and in the ants' modes of acquiring and communicating knowledge to each other) which are mysteries to us. The terror of dogs in 'haunted houses' and of horses in passing 'haunted' scenes has often been reported, and is alluded to briefly by Mr. Tylor. Balaam's ass, and the dogs which crouched and whined before Athene, whom Eumæus could not see, are 'classical' instances.

The weakness of the anthropological argument here is, we must repeat, that we know little more about the mental condition and experiences of the early thinkers who developed the doctrine of Souls than we know about the mental condition and experiences of the lower animals. And the more firmly a philosopher believes in the Darwinian hypothesis, the less, he must admit, can he suppose himself to know about the twilight ages, between the lower animal and the fully evolved man. What kind of creature was man when he first conceived the germs, or received the light, of Religion? All is guess-work here! We may just allude to Hegel's theory that clairvoyance and hypnotic phenomena are produced in a kind of temporary *atavism*, or 'throwing back' to a remotely ancient condition of the 'sensitive soul' (*fühlende Seele*). The 'sensitive' [unconditioned, clairvoyant] faculty or 'soul' is 'a disease when it becomes a state of the self-conscious, educated, self-possessed human being of civilisation.'<sup>1</sup> 'Second sight,' Hegel thinks, was a product of an earlier day and earlier mental condition than ours.

<sup>1</sup> *Phil. des Geistes*, pp. 406, 408.



Approaching this almost untouched subject—the early psychical condition of man—not from the side of metaphysical speculations like Hegel, but with the instruments of modern psychology and physiology, Dr. Max Dessoir, of Berlin, following, indeed, M. Taine, has arrived, as we saw, at somewhat similar conclusions. ‘This fully conscious life of the spirit,’ in which we moderns now live, ‘seems to rest upon a substratum of reflex action of a hallucinatory type.’ Our actual modern condition is *not* ‘fundamental,’ and ‘hallucination represents, at least in its nascent condition, the main trunk of our psychical existence.’<sup>1</sup>

Now, suppose that the remote and unknown ancestors of ours who first developed the doctrine of souls had not yet spread far from ‘the main trunk of our psychical existence,’ far from constant hallucination. In that case (at least, according to Dr. Dessoir’s theory) their psychical experiences would be such as we cannot estimate, yet cannot leave, as a possibility influencing religion, out of our calculations.

If early men were ever in a condition in which telepathy and clairvoyance (granting their possibility) were prevalent, one might expect that faculties so useful would be developed in the struggle for existence. That they are deliberately cultivated by modern savages we know. The Indian foster-mother of John Tanner used, when food was needed, to suggest herself into an hypnotic condition, so that she became *clairvoyante* as to the whereabouts of game. Tanner, an English boy, caught early by the Indians, was sceptical, but came to practise the same art, not unsuccessfully, himself.<sup>2</sup> His reminiscences, which he dictated on his return to civilisation, were certainly not feigned in the interests of any theories. But the most telepathic human stocks, it may be said, ought, *ceteris paribus*, to have been the most successful

<sup>1</sup> See also Mr. A. J. Balfour’s Presidential Address to the Society for Psychical Research, *Proceedings*, vol. x. See, too, Taine, *De l’Intelligence*, i. 78, 100, 139.

<sup>2</sup> Tanner’s *Narrative*, New York, 1830.

in the struggle for existence. We may infer that the *cetera* were not *paria*, the clairvoyant state not being precisely the best for the practical business of life. But really we know nothing of the psychical state of the earliest men. They *may* have had experiences tending towards a belief in 'spirits,' of which we can tell nothing. We are obliged to guess, in considerable ignorance of the actual conditions, and this historical ignorance inevitably besets all anthropological speculation about the origin of religion.

The knowledge of our nescience as to the psychical condition of our first thinking ancestors may suggest hesitation as to taking it for granted that early man was on our own or on the modern savage level in 'psychical' experience. Even savage races, as Mr. Tylor justly says, attribute superior psychical knowledge to neighbouring tribes on a yet lower level of culture than themselves. The Finn esteems the Lapp sorcerers above his own; the Lapp yields to the superior pretensions of the Samoyeds. There may be more ways than one of explaining this relative humility: there is Hegel's way and there is Mr. Tylor's way. We cannot be certain, *a priori*, that the earliest man knew no more of supernormal or apparently supernormal experiences than we commonly do, or that these did not influence his thoughts on animism.

It is an example of the chameleon-like changes of science (even of 'science falsely so called' if you please) that when he wrote his book, in 1871, Mr. Tylor could not possibly have anticipated this line of argument. 'Psychical planes' had not been invented; hypnotism, with its problems, had not been much noticed in England. But 'Spiritualism' was flourishing. Mr. Tylor did not ignore this revival of savage philosophy. He saw very well that the end of the century was beholding the partial rehabilitation of beliefs which were scouted from 1660 to 1850. Seventy years ago, as Mr. Tylor says, Dr. Macculloch, in his 'Description of the Western Islands of Scotland,' wrote of 'the famous Highland second sight' that 'ceasing to be believed it has ceased to exist.'

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 143.

Dr. Macculloch was mistaken in his facts. 'Second sight' has never ceased to exist (or to be believed to exist), and it has recently been investigated in the 'Journal' of the Caledonian Medical Society. Mr. Tylor himself says that it has been 'reinstated in a far larger range of society, and under far better circumstances of learning and prosperity.' This fact he ascribes generally to 'a direct revival from the regions of savage philosophy and peasant folklore,' a revival brought about in great part by the writings of Swedenborg. To-day things have altered. The students now interested in this whole class of alleged supernormal phenomena are seldom believers in the philosophy of Spiritualism in the American sense of the word.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Tylor, as we have seen, attributes the revival of interest in this obscure class of subjects to the influence of Swedenborg. It is true, as has been shown, that Swedenborg attracted the attention of Kant. But modern interest has chiefly been aroused and kept alive by the phenomena of hypnotism. The interest is now, among educated students, really scientific.

Thus Mr. William James, Professor of Psychology in the University of Harvard, writes :

'I was attracted to this subject (Psychical Research) some years ago by my love of fair play in Science.'<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Tylor is not incapable of appreciating this attitude. Even the so-called 'spirit manifestations,' he says, 'should be discussed on their merits,' and the investigation 'would seem apt to throw light on some most interesting psychological questions.' Nothing can be more remote from the logic of Hume.

The ideas of Mr. Tylor on the causes of the origin of religion are now criticised, not from the point of view of spiritualism, but of experimental psychology. We hold

<sup>1</sup> As 'spiritualism' is often used in opposition to 'materialism,' and with no reference to rapping 'spirits,' the modern belief in that class of intelligences may here be called spiritism.

<sup>2</sup> *The Will to Believe*, preface, p. xiv.

that very probably there exist human faculties of unknown scope; that these conceivably were more powerful and prevalent among our very remote ancestors who founded religion; that they may still exist in savage as in civilised races, and that they may have confirmed, if they did not originate, the doctrine of separable souls. If they *do* exist, the circumstance is important, in view of the fact that modern ideas rest on a denial of their existence.

Mr. Tylor next examines the savage and other *names* for the ghost-soul, such as shadow (*umbra*), breath (*spiritus*), and he gives cases in which the *shadow* of a man is regarded as equivalent to his *life*. Of course, the shadow in the sunlight does not resemble the phantasm in a dream. The two, however, were combined and identified by early thinkers, while *breath* and *heart* were used as symbols of 'that in men which makes them live,' a phrase found among the natives of Nicaragua in 1528. The confessedly symbolical character of the phrase, 'it is *not* precisely the heart, but that in them which makes them live,' proves that to the speaker life was *not* 'heart' or 'breath,' but that these terms were known to be material word-counters for the conception of life.<sup>1</sup> Whether the earliest thinkers identified heart, breath, shadow, with life, or whether they consciously used words of material origin to denote an immaterial conception, of course we do not know. But the word in the latter case would react on the thought, till the Roman inhaled (as his life?) the last breath of his dying kinsman, he well knowing that the Manes of the said kinsman were elsewhere, and not to be inhaled.

Subdivisions and distinctions were then recognised, as of the Egyptian *Ka*, the 'double,' the Karen *kelah*, or 'personal life-phantom' (*wraith*), on one side, and the Karen *thah*, 'the responsible moral soul,' on the other. The Roman *umbra* hovers about the grave, the *manes* go to Orcus, the *spiritus* seeks the stars.

We are next presented with a crowd of cases in which

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 432, 433. Citing Oviedo, *Hist. de Nicaragua*, pp. 21-51.

sickness or lethargy is ascribed by savages to the absence of the patient's spirit, or of one of his spirits. This idea of migratory spirit is next used by savages to explain certain proceedings of the sorcerer, priest, or seer. His soul, or one of his souls is thought to go forth to distant places in quest of information, while the seer, perhaps, remains lethargic. Probably, in the struggle for existence, he lost more by being lethargic than he gained by being clairvoyant!

Now, here we touch the first point in Mr. Tylor's theory, where a critic may ask, Was this belief in the wandering abroad of the seer's spirit a theory not only false in its form (as probably it is), but also wholly unbased on experiences which might raise a presumption in favour of the existence of phenomena really supernatural? By 'supernormal' experiences I here mean such as the acquisition by a human mind of knowledge which could not be obtained by it through the recognised channels of sensation. Say, for the sake of argument, that a person, savage or civilised, obtains in trance information about distant places or events, to him unknown, and, through channels of sense, unknowable. The savage will explain this by saying that the seer's soul, shadow, or spirit, wandered out of the body to the distant scene. This is, at present, an unverified theory. But still, for the sake of argument, suppose that the seer did honestly obtain this information in trance, lethargy, or hypnotic sleep, or any other condition. If so, the modern savage (or his more gifted ancestors) would have other grounds for his theory of the wandering soul than any ground presented by normal occurrences, ordinary dreams, shadows, and so forth. Again, in human nature there would be (if such things occur) a potentiality of experiences other and stranger than materialism will admit as possible. It will (granting the facts) be impossible to aver that there is *nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*. The soul will be not *ce qu'un vain peuple pense* under the new popular tradition, and the savage's theory of the spirit will be, at least in part, based on other than normal and every-day

facts. That condition in which the seer acquires information, not otherwise accessible, about events remote in space, is what the mesmerists of the mid-century called 'travelling clairvoyance.'

If such an experience be *in rerum natura*, it will not, of course, justify the savage's theory that the soul is a separable entity, capable of voyaging, and also capable of existing after the death of the body. But it will give the savage a better excuse for his theory than normal experiences provide; and will even raise a presumption that reflection on mere ordinary experiences—death, shadow, trance—is not the *sole* origin of his theory. For a savage so acute as Mr. Tylor's hypothetical early reasoner might decline to believe that his own or a friend's soul had been absent on an expedition, unless it brought back information not normally to be acquired. However, we cannot reason, *a priori*, as to how far the logic of a savage might or might not go on occasion.

In any case, a scientific reasoner might be expected to ask: 'Is this alleged acquisition of knowledge, *not* through the ordinary channels of sense, a thing *in rerum natura*?' Because, if it is, we must obviously increase our list of the savage's reasons for believing in a soul: we must make his reasons include 'psychical' experiences, and there must be an X region to investigate.

These considerations did not fail to present themselves to Mr. Tylor. But his manner of dealing with them is peculiar. With his unequalled knowledge of the lower races, it was easy for him to examine travellers' tales about savage seers who beheld distant events in vision, and to allow them what weight he thought proper, after discounting possibilities of falsehood and collusion. He might then have examined modern narratives of similar performances among the civilised, which are abundant. It is obvious and undeniable that if the supernormal acquisition of knowledge in trance is a *vera causa*, a real process, however rare, Mr. Tylor's theory needs modifications; while the character of the savage's reasoning becomes more creditable to the savage, and appears as

better bottomed than we had been asked to suppose. But Mr. Tylor does not examine this large body of evidence at all, or, at least, does not offer us the details of his examination. He merely writes in this place:

‘A typical spiritualistic instance may be quoted from Jung-Stilling, who says that examples have come to his knowledge of sick persons who, longing to see absent friends, have fallen into a swoon, during which they have appeared to the distant objects of their affection.’<sup>1</sup>

Jung-Stilling (though he wrote before modern ‘Spiritualism’ came in) is not a very valid authority; there is plenty of better evidence than his, but Mr. Tylor passes it by, merely remarking that ‘modern Europe has kept closely enough to the lines of early philosophy.’ Modern Europe has indeed done so, if it explains the supernormal acquisition of knowledge, or the hallucinatory appearance of a distant person to his friend by a theory of wandering ‘spirits.’ But facts do not cease to be facts because wrong interpretations have been put upon them by savages, by Jung-Stilling, or by anyone else. The real question is, Do such events occur among lower and higher races, beyond explanation by fraud and fortuitous coincidence? We gladly grant that the belief in Animism, when it takes the form of a theory of ‘wandering spirits,’ is probably untenable, as it is assuredly of savage origin. But we are not absolutely so sure that in this aspect the theory is not based on actual experiences, not of a normal and ordinary kind. If so, the savage philosophy and its supposed survivals in belief will appear in a new light. And we are inclined to hold that an examination of the mass of evidence to which Mr. Tylor offers here so slight an allusion will at least make it wise to suspend our judgment, not only as to the origins of the savage theory of spirits, but as to the materialistic hypothesis of the absence of a psychical element in man.

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 440. Citing Stilling after Dale Owen, and quoting Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace’s *Scientific Aspect of the Supernatural*, p. 43. Mr. Tylor also adds folk-lore practices of ghost-seeing, as on St. John’s Eve. St. Mark’s Eve, too, is in point, as far as folk-lore goes.

I may seem to have outrun already the limits of permissible hypothesis. It may appear absurd to surmise that there can exist in man, savage or civilised, a faculty for acquiring information not accessible by the known channels of sense, a faculty attributed by savage philosophers to the wandering soul. But one may be permitted to quote the opinion of M. Charles Richet, Professor of Physiology in the Faculty of Medicine in Paris. It is not cited because M. Richet is a professor of physiology, but because he reached his conclusion after six years of minute experiment. He says: 'There exists in certain persons, at certain moments, a faculty of acquiring knowledge which has no *rapport* with our normal faculties of that kind.'<sup>1</sup>

Instances tending to raise a presumption in favour of M. Richet's idea may now be sought in savage and civilised life.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, S.P.R. v. 167.



## IV

## 'OPENING THE GATES OF DISTANCE'

'To open the Gates of Distance' is the poetical Zulu phrase for what is called clairvoyance, or *vue à distance*. This, if it exists, is the result of a faculty of undetermined nature, whereby knowledge of remote events may be acquired, not through normal channels of sense. As the Zulus say: '*Isiyezi* is a state in which a man becomes slightly insensible. He is awake, but still sees things which he would not see if he were not in a state of ecstasy (*nasiyesi*).'<sup>1</sup> The Zulu description of *isiyezi* includes what is technically styled 'dissociation.' No psychologist or pathologist will deny that visions of an hallucinatory sort may occur in dissociated states, say in the *petit mal* of epilepsy. The question, however, is whether any such visions convey actual information not otherwise to be acquired, beyond the reach of chance coincidence to explain.

A Scottish example, from the records of a court of law, exactly illustrates the Zulu theory. At the moment when the husband of Jonka Dyneis was in danger six miles from her house in his boat, Jonka 'was found, and seen standing at her own house wall in a trance, and being taken, she could not give answer, but stood as bereft of her senses, and when she was asked why she was so moved, she answered, "If our boat be not lost, she was in great hazard."' (October 2, 1616.)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Callaway, *Religion of the Zulus*, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> Graham Dalzell, *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, p. 481.

The belief in opening the Gates of Distance is, of course, very widely diffused. The gift is attributed to Apollonius of Tyana, to Plotinus, to many Saints, to Catherine de' Medici, to the Rev. Mr. Peden,<sup>1</sup> and to Jeanne d'Arc, while the faculty is the stock in trade of savage seers in all regions.<sup>2</sup>

The question, however, on which Mr. Tylor does not touch, is, *Are any of the stories true?* If so, of course they would confirm in the mind of the savage his theory of the wandering soul. Now, to find anything like attested cases of successful clairvoyance among savages is a difficult task. White men either scout the idea, or are afraid of seeming superstitious if they give examples, or, if they *do* give examples, are accused of having sunk to the degraded level of Zulus or Red Indians. Even where travellers, like Scheffer, have told about their own experiences, the narratives are omitted by modern writers on savage divination.<sup>3</sup> We must therefore make our own researches, and it is to be noted that the stories of successful savage clairvoyance are given as illustrations merely, not as evidence to facts, for we cannot cross-examine the witnesses.

Mr. Tylor dismisses the topic in a manner rather cavalier :

'Without discussing on their merits the accounts of what is called "second sight,"<sup>4</sup> it may be pointed out that they are related among savage tribes, as when Captain Jonathan Carver obtained from a Cree medicine-man a true prophecy of the arrival of a canoe with news next day at noon ; or when Mr. J. Mason Brown, travelling with two *voyageurs* on the Copper Mine River, was met by Indians of the very band he was seeking, these having been sent by their medicine-man, who, on enquiry, stated

<sup>1</sup> See good evidence in *Ker of Kersland's Memoirs*.

<sup>2</sup> Aulus Gellius, xv. 18, Dio Cassius, lxxvii., Crespet, *De la Haine du Diable, Procès de Jeanne d'Arc*.

<sup>3</sup> See 'Shamanism in Siberia,' *J.A.I.*, November 1894, pp. 147-149, and compare Scheffer. The article is very learned and interesting.

<sup>4</sup> Williams mentions second sight in Fiji, but gives no examples.

that "he saw them coming, and heard them talk on their journey."'<sup>1</sup>

Now, in our opinion, the 'merits' of stories of second sight need discussion, because they may, if well attested, raise a presumption that the savage's theory has a better foundation than Mr. Tylor supposes. Oddly enough, though Mr. Tylor does not say so, Dr. Brinton (from whom he borrows his two anecdotes) is more or less of our opinion.

'There are,' says Dr. Brinton, 'statements supported by unquestionable testimony, which ought not to be passed over in silence, and yet I cannot but approach them with hesitation. They are so revolting to the laws of exact science, so alien, I had almost said, to the experience of our lives. Yet is this true, or are such experiences only ignored and put aside without serious consideration?'

That is exactly what we complain of: the alleged facts are 'put aside without serious consideration.'

We, at least, are not slaves to the idea that 'the laws of exact science' must be the only laws at work in the world. Science, however exact, does not pretend to have discovered all 'laws.'

To return to actual examples of the alleged supernatural acquisition of knowledge by savages: Dr. Brinton gives an example from Charlevoix and General Mason Brown's anecdote.<sup>2</sup> In General Mason Brown's instance the medicine-man, at a great distance, bade his emissaries 'seek three whites, whose horses, arms, attire, and personal appearance he minutely described, which description was repeated to General Brown by the warriors *before they saw his two companions.*' General Brown assured Dr. Brinton of 'the accuracy of this in every particular.' Mr. Tylor has certainly not improved the story in his condensed version. Dr. Brinton refers to 'many' tales

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i. 447. Mr. Tylor cites Dr. Brinton's *Myths of the New World*, p. 269. The reference in the recent edition is p. 289. Carver's case is given under the head 'Possession' later.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal Historique*, p. 362; *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1866.

such as these, and some will be found in 'Among the Zulus,' by Mr. David Leslie (1875).

Mr. Leslie was a Scottish sportsman, brought up from boyhood in familiarity with the Zulus. His knowledge of their language and customs was minute, and his book, privately printed, contains much interesting matter. He writes :

'I was obliged to proceed to the Zulu country to meet my Kaffir elephant-hunters, the time for their return having arrived. They were hunting in a very unhealthy country, and I had agreed to wait for them on the North-East border, the nearest point I could go to with safety. I reached the appointed rendezvous, but could not gain the slightest intelligence of my people at the kraal.

'After waiting some time, and becoming very uneasy about them, one of my servants recommended me to go to the doctor, and at last, out of curiosity and *pour passer le temps*, I did go.

'I stated what I wanted—information about my hunters—and I was met by a stern refusal. "I cannot tell anything about white men," said he, "and I know nothing of their ways." However, after some persuasion and promise of liberal payment, impressing upon him the fact that it was not white men but Kaffirs I wanted to know about, he at last consented, saying "he would *open the Gate of Distance*, and would travel through it, even although his body should lie before me."

'His first proceeding was to ask me the number and names of my hunters. To this I demurred, telling him that if he obtained that information from me he might easily substitute some news which he may have heard from others, instead of the "spiritual telegraphic news" which I expected him to get from his "familiar."

'To this he answered: "I told you I did not understand white men's ways; but if I am to do anything for you it must be done in my way—not yours." On receiving this fillip I felt inclined to give it up, as I thought I might receive some rambling statement with a considerable dash

of truth, it being easy for anyone who knew anything of hunting to give a tolerably correct idea of their motions. However, I conceded this point also, and otherwise satisfied him.

'The doctor then made eight little fires—that being the number of my hunters; on each he cast some roots,<sup>1</sup> which emitted a curious sickly odour and thick smoke; into each he cast a small stone, shouting, as he did so, the name to which the stone was dedicated; then he ate some "medicine," and fell over in what appeared to be a trance for about ten minutes, during all which time his limbs kept moving. Then he seemed to wake, went to one of the fires, raked the ashes about, looked at the stone attentively, described the man faithfully, and said: "This man has died of the fever, and your gun is lost."

'To the next fire as before: "This man" (correctly described) "has killed four elephants," and then he described the tusks. The next: "This man" (again describing him) "has been killed by an elephant, but your gun is coming home," and so on through the whole, the men being minutely and correctly described; their success or non-success being equally so. I was told where the survivors were, and what they were doing, and that in three months they would come out, but as they would not expect to find me waiting on them there so long after the time appointed, they would not pass that way.

'I took a particular note of all this information at the time, and to my utter amazement *it turned out correct in every particular.*

'It was scarcely within the bounds of possibility that this man could have had ordinary intelligence of the hunters; they were scattered about in a country two hundred miles away.'

Mr. Leslie could discover no explanation, nor was any suggested by friends familiar with the country and the natives whom he consulted. He gives another example, which may be explained by 'suggestion.' A parallel

<sup>1</sup> Probably *impepo*, eaten by seers, according to Callaway.

case from Central Africa will be found in the 'Journal of the Anthropological Institute,' November 1897, p. 320, where 'private information,' as usual, would explain the singular facts.

The Zulus themselves lay claim to a kind of clairvoyance which looks like the result of intense visualising power, combined with the awakening of the subconscious memory.<sup>1</sup>

'There is among black men a something which is divination within them. When anything valuable is lost, they look for it at once; when they cannot find it, each one begins to practise this inner divination, trying to feel where the thing is; for, not being able to see it, he feels internally a pointing, which tells him if he will go down to such a place it is there, and he will find it. At length it says he will find it; at length he sees it, and himself approaching it; before he begins to move from where he is, he sees it very clearly indeed, and there is an end of doubt. That sight is so clear that it is as though it was not an inner sight, but as if he saw the very thing itself, and the place where it is; so he quickly arises and goes to the place. If it is a hidden place he throws himself into it, as though there was something that impelled him to go as swiftly as the wind; and, in fact, he finds the thing, if he has not acted by mere head-guessing. If it has been done by real inner divination, he really sees it. But if it is done by mere head-guessing and knowledge that he has not gone to such a place and such a place, and that therefore it must be in such another place, he generally misses the mark.'

Other Zulu instances will be given under the heads 'Possession' and 'Fetishism.'

To take a Northern people: In his 'History of the Lapps' <sup>2</sup> Scheffer describes mechanical modes of divination practised by that race, who use a drum and other objects for the purpose. These modes depend on mere traditional rules for interpreting the accidental combina-

<sup>1</sup> Callaway's *Religion of the Amazulu*, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> Oxford, 1674.

tions of lots. But a Lapp confessed to Scheffer, with tears, that he could not help seeing visions, as he proved by giving Scheffer a minute relation 'of whatever particulars had happened to me in my journey to Lapland. And he further complained that he knew not how to make use of his eyes, since things altogether distant were presented to them.' This Lapp was anxious to become a Christian, hence his regret at being a 'rare and valuable' example of clairvoyance. Torfæus also was posed by the clairvoyance of a Samoyed, as was Regnard by a Lapp seer.<sup>1</sup>

The next case is of old date, and, like the other savage examples, is merely given for purposes of illustration.

'25<sup>e</sup> Lettre.<sup>2</sup>

"*Suite des Traditions des Sauvages.*"

'Au Fort de la Rivière de St. Joseph,  
ce 14 Septembre 1721.

"*Des Jongleurs*"—... Vous avez vu à Paris Madame de Marson, & elle y est encore ; voici ce que M. le Marquis de Vaudreuil son Gendre, actuellement notre Gouverneur Général, me raconta cet Hyver, & qu'il a sçû de cette Dame, qui n'est rien moins qu'un esprit foible. Elle étoit un jour fort inquiète au sujet de M. de Marson, son Mari, lequel commandoit dans un Poste, que nous avions en Accadie ; et étoit absent, & le tems qu'il avoit marqué pour son retour, étoit passé.

'Une Femme Sauvage, qui vit Madame de Marson en peine, lui en demanda la cause, & l'ayant apprise, lui dit, après y avoir un peu rêvé, de ne plus se chagriner, que son Epoux reviendrait tel jour et à telle heure, qu'elle lui marqua, avec un chapeau gris sur la tête. Comme elle s'aperçut que la Dame n'ajoutoit point foi à sa prédiction, au jour & à l'heure, qu'elle avoit assignée, elle retourna chez elle, lui demanda si elle ne vouloit pas venir voir arriver son Mari, & la pressa de telle sorte de la suivre, qu'elle l'entraîna au bord de la Rivière.

<sup>1</sup> Voyages.

<sup>2</sup> From Charlevoix, *Journal Historique*, p. 362.

'A peine y étoient-elles arrivées, que M. de Marson parut dans un Canot, un chapeau gris sur la tête; & ayant appris ce qui s'étoit passé, assûra qu'il ne pouvoit pas comprendre comment la Sauvagesse avoit pû sçavoir l'heure & le jour de son arrivée.'

It is unusual for European travellers and missionaries to give anecdotes which might seem to 'confirm the delusions of benighted savages.' Such anecdotes, again, are among the *arcana* of these wild philosophers, and are not readily communicated to strangers. When successful cases are reported, it is natural to assert that they come through Europeans who have sunk into barbarous superstition, or that they may be explained by fraud and collusion. It is certain, however, that savage proficients believe in their own powers, though no less certainly they will eke them out by imposture. Seers are chosen in Zululand, as among Eskimos and Samoyeds, from the class which in Europe supplies the persons who used to be, but are no longer the most favourite hypnotic subjects, 'abnormal children,' epileptic and hysterical. These are subjected to 'a long and methodical course of training.'<sup>1</sup> Stoll, speaking of Guatemala, says that 'certainly most of the induced and spontaneous phenomena with which we are familiar occur among savages,' and appeals to travellers for observations.<sup>2</sup> Information is likely to come in, as educated travellers devote attention to the topic.

Dr. Callaway translates some Zulu communications which indicate the amount of belief in this very practical and sceptical people. Amusing illustrations of their scepticism will be quoted later, under 'Possession,' but they do accept as seers certain hysterical patients. These are tested by their skill in finding objects which have been hidden without their knowledge. They then behave much like Mr. Stuart Cumberland, but have not the advantage of muscular contact with the person who knows where the hidden objects are concealed. The neighbours even deny that they have hidden anything at all. 'When

<sup>1</sup> Bastian, *Ueber psych. Beobacht.* p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 26.



they persist in their denial . . . he finds all the things that they have hidden. They see that he is a great *inyanga* (seer) when he has found all the things they have concealed.' No doubt he is guided, perhaps in a super-sensitive condition, by the unconscious indications of the excited spectators.

The point is that, while the savage conjurer will doubtless use fraud wherever he can, still the experience of low races is in favour of employing as seers the class of people who in Europe were, till recently, supposed to make the best hypnotic subjects. Thus, in West Africa, 'the presiding elders, during your initiation to the secret society of your tribe, discover this gift [of Ebumtupism, or second sight], and so select you as "a witch doctor."'<sup>1</sup> Among the Karens, the 'Wees,' or prophets, 'are nervous excitable men, such as would become mediums,'<sup>2</sup> as mediums are diagnosed by Mr. Tylor.

In short, not to multiply examples, there is an element of actual observation and of *bona fides* entangled in the trickery of savage practice. Though the subjects may be selected partly because of the physical phenomena of convulsions which they exhibit, and which favourably impress their clients, they are also such subjects as occasionally yield that evidence of supernormal faculty which is investigated by modern psychologists, like Richet, Janet, and William James.

The following example, by no means unique, shows the view taken by savages of their own magic, after they have become Christians. Catherine Wabose, a converted Red Indian seeress, described her preliminary fast, at the age of puberty. After six days of abstention from food she was rapt away to an unknown place, where a radiant being welcomed her. Later a dark round object promised her the gift of prophecy. She found her natural senses greatly sharpened by lack of food. She first exercised her powers when her kinsfolk in large numbers were starving. A medicine-lodge, or 'tabernacle' as Lafitau calls it, was

<sup>1</sup> Miss Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 460.

<sup>2</sup> *Primitive Culture*, ii. 131; Mason's *Burnah*, p. 107.

built for her, and she crawled in. As is well known, these lodges are violently shaken during the magician's stay within them, which the early Jesuits at first attributed to muscular efforts by the seers. In 1637 Père Lejeune was astonished by the violent motions of a large lodge, tenanted by a small man. One sorcerer, with an appearance of candour, vowed that 'a great wind entered boisterously,' and the Father was assured that, if he went in himself, he would become clairvoyant. He did not make the experiment. The Methodist convert, Catherine, gave the same description of her own experience: 'The lodge began shaking violently by supernatural means. I knew this by the compressed current of air above, and the noise of motion.' She had been beating a small drum and singing, now she lay quiet. The radiant 'orbicular' spirit then informed her that they 'must go westwards for game; how short-sighted you are!' 'The advice was taken and crowned by instant success.' This established her reputation.<sup>1</sup> Catherine's conversion was led up to by a dream of her dying son, who beheld a Sacred Figure, and received from Him white raiment. Her magical songs tell how unseen hands shake the magic lodge. They invoke the Great Spirit that

' Illumines earth  
Illumines heaven !

Ah, say what Spirit, or Body, is this Body,  
That fills the world around,

Speak, man, ah say

What Spirit, or Body, is this Body ?'

It is like a savage hymn to Hegel's *fühlende Seele*: the all-pervading Sensitive Soul. We are reminded, too, of 'the doctrine of the Sanscrit Upanishads: There is no limit to the knowing of the Self that knows.'<sup>2</sup>

Unluckily Catherine was not asked to give other examples of what she considered her successes.

Acosta, who has not the best possible repute as an

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, i. 394.

<sup>2</sup> Brinton's *Religions of Primitive Peoples*, p. 57.

authority, informs us that Peruvian clairvoyants 'tell what hath passed in the furthest parts before news can come. In the distance of two or three hundred leagues they would tell what the Spaniards did or suffered in their civil wars.' To Du Pont, in 1606, a sorcerer 'rendered a true oracle of the coming of Poutrincourt, saying his Devil had told him so.'<sup>1</sup>

We now give a modern case, from a scientific laboratory, of knowledge apparently acquired in no normal way, by a person of the sort usually chosen to be a prophet, or wizard, by savages.

Professor Richet writes :<sup>2</sup>

'On Monday, July 2, 1888, after having passed all the day in my laboratory, I hypnotised Léonie at 8 P.M., and while she tried to make out a diagram concealed in an envelope I said to her quite suddenly: "What has happened to M. Langlois?" Léonie knows M. Langlois from having seen him two or three times some time ago in my physiological laboratory, where he acts as my assistant.—"He has burnt himself," Léonie replied.—"Good," I said, "and where has he burnt himself?"—"On the left hand. It is not fire: it is—I don't know its name. Why does he not take care when he pours it out?"—"Of what colour," I asked, "is the stuff which he pours out?"—"It is not red, it is brown; he has hurt himself very much—the skin puffed up directly."

'Now, this description is admirably exact. At 4 P.M. that day M. Langlois had wished to pour some bromine into a bottle. He had done this clumsily, so that some of the bromine flowed on to his left hand, which held the funnel, and at once burnt him severely. Although he at once put his hand into water, wherever the bromine had touched it a blister was formed in a few seconds—a blister which one could not better describe than by saying, "the skin puffed up." I need not say that Léonie had not left my house, nor seen anyone from my laboratory. Of this I am *absolutely certain*, and I am certain that I had not

<sup>1</sup> Purchas, p. 629.

<sup>2</sup> S.P.R. *Proceedings*, vol. vi. 69.

mentioned the incident of the burn to anyone. Moreover, this was the first time for nearly a year that M. Langlois had handled bromine, and when Léonie saw him six months before at the laboratory he was engaged in experiments of quite another kind.'

Here the savage reasoner would infer that Léonie's spirit had visited M. Langlois. The modern inquirer will probably say that Léonie became aware of what was passing in the mind of M. Richet. This supranormal way of acquiring knowledge was observed in the last century by M. de Puységur in one of his earliest cases of somnambulism. MM. Binet and Féré say: 'It is not yet admitted that the subject is able to divine the thoughts of the magnetiser without any material communication;' while they grant, as a minimum, that 'research should be continued in this direction.'<sup>1</sup> They appear to think that Léonie may have read 'involuntary signs' in the aspect of M. Richet. This is a difficult hypothesis.

Here follows a case recorded in his diary by Mr. Dobbie, of Adelaide, Australia, who has practised hypnotism for curative purposes. He explains (June 10, 1884) that he had mesmerised Miss — on several occasions to relieve rheumatic pain and sore throat. He found her to be clairvoyant.

'The following is a verbatim account of the second time I tested her powers in this respect, April 12, 1884. There were four persons present during the *séance*. One of the company wrote down the replies as they were spoken.

'Her father was at the time over fifty miles away, but we did not know exactly where, so I questioned her as follows: "Can you find your father at the present moment?" At first she replied that she could not see him, but in a minute or two she said, "Oh, yes; now I can see him, Mr. Dobbie." "Where is he?" "Sitting

<sup>1</sup> Binet and Féré, *Animal Magnetism*, p. 64.

at a large table in a large room, and there are a lot of people going in and out." "What is he doing?" "Writing a letter, and there is a book in front of him." "Whom is he writing to?" "To the newspaper." Here she paused and laughingly said, "Well, I declare, he is writing to the A B" (naming a newspaper). "You said there was a book there. Can you tell me what book it is?" "It has gilt letters on it." "Can you read them, or tell me the name of the author?" She read, or pronounced slowly, "W. L. W." (giving the full surname of the author). She answered several minor questions *re* the furniture in the room, and I then said to her, "Is it any effort or trouble to you to travel in this way?" "Yes, a little; I have to think."

'I now stood behind her, holding a half-crown in my hand, and asked her if she could tell me what I had in my hand, to which she replied, "It is a shilling." It seemed as though she could see what was happening miles away easier than she could see what was going on in the room.

'Her father returned home nearly a week afterwards, and was perfectly astounded when told by his wife and family what he had been doing on that particular evening; and, although previous to that date he was a thorough sceptic as to clairvoyance, he frankly admitted that my clairvoyant was perfectly correct in every particular. He also informed us that the book referred to was a new one, which he had purchased after he had left his home, so that there was no possibility of his daughter guessing that he had the book before him. I may add that the letter in due course appeared in the paper; and I saw and handled the book.'

A number of cases of so-called 'clairvoyance' will be found in the 'Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research.'<sup>1</sup> As the authors of these essays remark, even after discounting, in each case, fraud, malobservation,

<sup>1</sup> Vol. vii. Mrs. Sidgwick, pp. 30, 356; vol. vi. p. 66, Professor Richet, p. 407, Drs. Dufay and Azam.

and misreporting, the residue of cases can seldom justify either the savage theory of the wandering soul (which is not here seriously proposed) or Hegel's theory that the *fühlende Seele* is unconditioned by space. For, if thought transference be a fact, the apparent clairvoyant may only be reading the mind of a person at a distance. The results, however, when successful, would naturally suggest to the savage thinker the belief in the wandering soul, or corroborate it if it had already been suggested by the common phenomena of dreaming.

To these instances of knowledge acquired otherwise than by the recognised channels of sense we might add the Scottish tales of 'second sight.' That phrase is merely a local term covering examples of what is called 'clairvoyance'—views of things remote in space, hallucinations of sight that coincide with some notable event, premonitions of things future, and so on. The belief and hallucinatory experiences are still very common in the Highlands, where I have myself collected many recent instances. Mr. Tyler observes that the examples 'prove a little too much; they vouch not only for human apparitions, but for such phantoms as demon dogs, and for still more fanciful symbolic omens.' This is perfectly true. I have found no cases of demon dogs; but wandering lights, probably of meteoric or miasmatic origin, are certainly regarded as tokens of death. This is obviously a superstitious hypothesis, the lights being real phenomena misconstrued. Again, funerals are not uncommonly seen where no funeral is taking place; it is then alleged that a real funeral, similar and similarly situated, soon afterwards occurred. On the hypothesis of believers, the percipients somehow behold

'Such refraction of events  
As often rises ere they rise.'

Even the savage cannot account for this experience by the wandering of the soul in space; nor do I suggest any explanation. I give, however, one or two instances. They are published in the 'Journal of the Caledonian Medical

Society,' 1897, by Dr. Alastair Macgregor, on the authority of the MSS. of his father, a minister in the island of Skye.

'He once told me that when he first went to Skye he scoffed at the idea of such a power as second sight being genuine; but he said that, after having been there for some years as a clergyman, he had been so often consulted *beforehand* by people who said they had seen visions of events which subsequently occurred, to my father's knowledge, in exact accordance with the form and details of the vision as foretold, that he was compelled to confess that some folks had, apparently at least, the unfortunate faculty.

'As my father expressed it, this faculty was "neither voluntary nor constant, and was considered rather annoying than agreeable to the possessors of it. The gift was possessed by individuals of both sexes, and its fits came on within doors and without, sitting and standing, at night and by day, and at whatever employment the votary might chance to be engaged."'

Here follows a typical example of the vision of a funeral:

'The session clerk at Dull, a small village in Perthshire, was ill, and my grandfather, clergyman there at the time, had to do duty for him. One fine summer evening, about 7 o'clock, a young man and woman came to get some papers filled up, as they were going to be married. My grandfather was with the couple in the session clerk's room, no doubt attending to the papers, when suddenly *all three* saw through the window a funeral procession passing along the road. From their dress the bulk of the mourners seemed to be farm labourers—indeed the young woman recognised some of them as natives of Dull, who had gone to live and work near Dunkeld. Remarks were naturally made by my grandfather and the young couple about the untimely hour for a funeral, and, hastily filling in the papers, my grandfather went out to get the key of the churchyard, which

was kept in the manse, as, without the key, the procession could not get into God's acre. Wondering how it was that he had received no intimation of the funeral, he went to the manse by a short cut, got the key, and hurried down to the churchyard gate, where, of course, he expected to find the cortège waiting. *Not a soul was there* except the young couple, who were as amazed as my grandfather!

'Well, at the same hour in the evening of the same day in the following week the funeral, this time in reality, arrived quite unexpectedly. The facts were that a boy, a native of Dull, had got gored by a bull at Dunkeld, and was so shockingly mangled that his remains were picked up and put into a coffin and taken without delay to Dull. A grave was dug as quickly as possible—the poor lad having no relatives—and the remains were interred. My grandfather and the young couple recognised several of the mourners as being among those whom they had seen out of the session clerk's room, exactly a week previously, in the phantom cortège. The young woman knew some of them personally, and related to them what she had seen, but they of course denied all knowledge of the affair, having been then in Dunkeld.'

I give another example, because the experience was auditory, as well as visual, and the prediction was announced before the event.

'The parishioners in Skye were evidently largely imbued with the Romanist-like belief in the powers of intercession vested in their clergyman; so when they had a "warning" or "vision" they usually consulted my father as to what they could do to prevent the coming disaster befalling their relatives or friends. In this way my father had the opportunity of noting down the minutiae of the "warning" or "vision" directly it was told him. Having had the advantage of a medical, previous to his theological, training, he was able to note down sound facts, unembellished by superadded imagination. Entering into this method of case-taking with a mind perfectly open, except



for a slight touch of scepticism, he was greatly surprised to discover how very frequently realisations occurred exactly in conformance with the minutiae of the vision as detailed in his note-book. Finally, he was compelled to discard his scepticism, and to admit that some people had undoubtedly the uncanny gift. Almost the first case he took (Case X.) was that of a woman who had one day a vision of her son falling over a high rock at Uig, in Skye, with a sheep or lamb.

'CASE X.—She heard her son exclaim in Gaelic, "This is a fatal lamb for me." As her son lived several miles from Uig, and was a fisherman, realisation seemed to my father very unlikely, but one month afterwards the realisation occurred only too true. Unknown to his mother, who had warned him against having anything to do with sheep or lambs, the son one day, instead of going out in his boat, thought he would take a holiday inland, and went off to Uig, where a farmer enlisted his services in separating some lambs from the ewes. One of the lambs ran away, and the fisher lad ran headlong after it, and not looking where he was going, on catching the lamb was pulled by it to the edge of one of the very picturesque but exceedingly dangerous rocks at Uig. Too late realising his critical position, he exclaimed, "This is a fatal lamb for me," but going with such an impetus he was unable to bring himself up in time, and, along with the lamb, fell over into the ravine below, and was, of course, killed on the spot. The farmer, when he saw the lad's danger, ran to his assistance, but was only in time to hear him cry out in Gaelic before disappearing over the brink of the precipice. This was predicted by the mother a month before. Was this simply a coincidence?'

Dr. Macgregor's remarks on the involuntary and unwelcome nature of the visions is borne out by what Scheffer, as already quoted, says concerning the Lapps.

In addition to visions which thus come unsought, contributing knowledge of things remote or even future, we may glance at visions which are provoked by various

methods. Drugs (*impepo*) are used, seers whirl in a wild dance till they fall senseless, or trance is induced by various kinds of self-suggestion or 'auto-hypnotism.' Fasting is also practised. In modern life the self-induced trance is common among 'mediums'—a subject to which we recur later.

So far, it will be observed, our evidence proves that precisely similar *beliefs* as to man's occasional power of opening the gates of distance have been entertained in a great variety of lands and ages, and by races in every condition of culture.<sup>1</sup> The alleged experiences are still said to occur, and have been investigated by physiologists of the eminence of M. Richet. The question cannot but arise as to the residuum of fact in these narrations, and it keeps on arising.

In the following chapter we discuss a mode of inducing hallucinations which has for anthropologists the interest of universal diffusion. The width of its range in savage races has not, we believe, been previously observed. We then add facts of modern experience, about the authenticity of which we, personally, entertain no doubt; and the provisional conclusion appears to be that savages have observed a psychological circumstance which has been ignored by professed psychologists, and which, certainly, does not fit into the ordinary materialistic hypothesis.

<sup>1</sup> The examples in the Old Testament, and in the *Life of St. Columba* by Adamnan, need only be alluded to as too familiar for quotation.

## V

## CRYSTAL VISIONS, SAVAGE AND CIVILISED

AMONG savage methods of provoking hallucinations whence knowledge may be supernormally obtained, various forms of 'crystal-gazing' are the most curious. We find the habit of looking into water, usually in a vessel, preferably a glass vessel, among Red Indians (Lejeune), Romans (Varro, cited in *Civitas Dei*, iii. 457), Africans of Fez (Leo Africanus); while Maoris use a drop of blood (Taylor), Egyptians use ink (Lane), and Australian savages employ a ball of polished stone, into which the seer 'puts himself' to descry the results of an expedition.<sup>1</sup>

I have already given, in the Introduction, Ellis's record of the Polynesian case. A hole being dug in the floor of his house, and filled with water, the priest looks for a vision of the thief who has carried off stolen goods. The Polynesian theory is that the god carries the spirit of the thief over the water, in which it is reflected. Lejeune's Red Indians make their patients gaze into the water, in which they will see the pictures of the things in the way of food or medicine that will do them good. In modern language, the instinctive knowledge existing implicitly in the patient's subconsciousness is thus brought into the range of his ordinary consciousness.

In 1887 the late Captain J. T. Bourke, of the U.S.

<sup>1</sup> Information, with a photograph of the stones, from a correspondent in West Maitland, Australia.

Cavalry, an original and careful observer, visited the Apaches in the interests of the Ethnological Bureau. He learned that one of the chief duties of the medicine-men was to find out the whereabouts of lost or stolen property. Na-a-cha, one of these *jossakeeds*, possessed a magic quartz crystal, which he greatly valued. Captain Bourke presented him with a still finer crystal. 'He could not give me an explanation of its magical use, except that by looking into it he could see everything he wanted to see.' Captain Bourke appears never to have heard of the modern experiments in crystal-gazing. Captain Bourke also discovered that the Apaches, like the Greeks, Australians, Africans, Maoris, and many other races, use the bull-roarer, turn-dun, or *rhombos*—a piece of wood which, being whirled round, causes a strange windy roar—in their mystic ceremonies. The wide use of the rhombos was known to Captain Bourke; that of the crystal was not.

For the Iroquois, Mrs. Erminie Smith supplies information about the crystal. 'Placed in a gourd of water, it could render visible the apparition of a person who has bewitched another.' She gives a case in European times of a medicine-man who found the witch's habitat, but got only an indistinct view of her face. On a second trial he was successful.<sup>1</sup> One may add that treasure-seekers among the Huille-che 'look earnestly' for what they want to find 'into a smooth slab of black stone, which I suppose to be basalt.'<sup>2</sup>

The kindness of Monsieur Lefébure enables me to give another example from Madagascar.<sup>3</sup> Flacourt, describing the Malagasies, says that they *squillent* (a word not in Littré), that is, divine by crystals, which 'fall from heaven when it thunders.' Of course the rain reveals the crystals, as it does the flint instruments called 'thunderbolts' in many countries. 'Lorsqu'ils squillent, ils ont

<sup>1</sup> *Report Ethnol. Bureau*, 1887-88, p. 460; vol. ii. p. 69. Captain Bourke's volume on *The Medicine Men of the Apaches* may also be consulted.

<sup>2</sup> Fitzroy, *Adventure*, vol. ii. p. 389.

<sup>3</sup> *L'Histoire de la grand Île Madagascar*, par le Sieur de Flacourt.

une de ces pierres au coing de leurs tablettes, disans qu'elle a la vertu de faire faire operation à leur figure de geomance.' Probably they used the crystals as do the Apaches. On July 15 a Malagasy woman viewed, whether in her crystal or otherwise, two French vessels which, like the Spanish fleet, were 'not in sight,' also officers, and doctors, and others aboard, whom she had seen, before their return to France, in Madagascar. The earliest of the ships did not arrive till August 11.

Dr. Callaway gives the Zulu practice, where the chief 'sees what will happen by looking into the vessel.'<sup>1</sup> The Shamans of Siberia and Eastern Russia employ the same method.<sup>2</sup> The case of the Inca, Yupanqui, is very curious. 'As he came up to a fountain he saw a piece of crystal fall into it, within which he beheld a figure of an Indian in the following shape. . . . The apparition then vanished, while the crystal remained. The Inca took care of it, and they say that he afterwards saw everything he wanted in it.'<sup>3</sup>

Here, then, we find the belief that hallucinations can be induced by one or other form of crystal-gazing, in ancient Peru, on the other side of the continent among the Huille-che, in Fez, in Madagascar, in Siberia, among Apaches, Hurons, Iroquois, Australian black fellows, Maoris, and in Polynesia. This is assuredly a wide range of geographical distribution. We also find the practice in Greece (Pausanias, VII. xxi. 12), in Rome (Varro), in Egypt, and in India.

Though anthropologists have paid no attention to the subject, it was of course familiar to later Europe. 'Miss X' has traced it among early Christians, in early Councils, in episcopal condemnations of *specularii*, and so to Dr. Dee, under James VI.; Aubrey; the Regent d'Orléans in St.-Simon's Memoirs; the modern mesmerists (Gregory, Mayo) and the mid-Victorian spiritualists, who, as usual, explained

Paris, 1661, ch. 76. *Veüe de deux Navires de France predite par les Negres, avant que l'on en peust sçavoir des Nouvelles, &c.*

<sup>1</sup> *Religion of the Amazulu*, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> *J.A.I.*, November 1894, p. 155. Ryckov is cited; *Zhurnal*, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> *Rites and Laws of the Incas*, Christoval de Molina, p. 12.

the phenomena, in their prehistoric way, by 'spirits.'<sup>1</sup> Till this lady examined the subject, nobody had thought of remarking that a belief so universal had probably some basis of facts, or nobody if we except two professors of chemistry and physiology, Drs. Gregory and Mayo. Miss X made experiments, beginning by accident, like George Sand, when a child.

The hallucinations which appear to her eyes in ink, or crystal, are:

1. Revived memories 'arising thus, and thus only, from the subconscious strata;'

'2. Objectivation of ideas or images—(a) consciously or (b) unconsciously—in the mind of the percipient;

'3. Visions, possibly telepathic or clairvoyant, implying acquirement of knowledge by supernormal means.'<sup>2</sup>

The examples given of the last class, the class which would be so useful to a priest or medicine-man asked to discover things lost, are of very slight interest.<sup>3</sup>

Since Miss X drew attention to this subject, experiments have proved beyond doubt that a fair percentage of people, sane and healthy, can see vivid landscapes, and figures of persons in motion, in glass balls and other vehicles. This faculty Dr. Parish attributes to 'dissociation,' practically to drowsiness. But he speaks by conjecture, and without having witnessed experiments, as will be shown later. I now offer a series of experiments with a glass ball, coming under my own observation, in which knowledge was apparently acquired in no ordinary way. Of the absence of fraud I am personally convinced, not only by the characters of all concerned, but by the nature of the circumstances. That adaptive memory did not later alter the narratives, as originally told, I feel certain, because they were reported to me, when I was not present, within less than a week, precisely as they are now given, except in cases specially noted.

<sup>1</sup> See Miss X's article, *S.P.R. Proceedings*, v. 486.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* v. 505.

<sup>3</sup> If any reader wishes to make experiments, he, or she, should not be astonished if the first crystal figure represents 'the sheeted dead,' or a person ill in bed. For some reason, or no reason, this is rather a usual prelude, signifying nothing.

Early in the present year (1897) I met a young lady who told me of three or four curious hallucinatory experiences of her own, which were sufficiently corroborated. She was innocent of psychical studies, and personally was, and is, in perfect health; the pale cast of thought being remote from her. I got a glass ball, and was present when she first looked into it. She saw, I remember, the interior of a house, with a full-length portrait of a person unknown. There were, I think, one or two other fancy pictures of the familiar kind. But she presently (living as she was, among strangers) developed a power of 'seeing' persons and places unknown to her, but familiar to them. These experiences do seem to me to be good examples of what is called 'thought transference'; indeed, I never before could get out of a level balance of doubt on that subject, a balance which now leans considerably to the affirmative side. There may be abundance of better evidence, but, knowing the persons and circumstances, and being present once at what seemed to me a crucial example, I was more inclined to be convinced. This attitude appears, to myself, illogical, but it is natural and usual.

We cannot tell what indications may be accidentally given in experiments in thought transference. But, in these cases of crystal-gazing, the detail was too copious to be conveyed, by a looker-on, in a wink or a cough. I do not mean to say that success was invariable. I thought of Dr. W. G. Grace, and the scribe saw an old man crawling along with a stick. But I doubt if Dr. Grace is very deeply seated in that mystic entity, my subconscious self. The 'series' which came right were sometimes, but not always, those of which the 'agent' (or person scribed for) was consciously thinking. But the examples will illustrate the various kinds of occurrences.

Here one should first consider the arguments against accepting recognition of objects merely described by another person. The crystal-gazer may know the inquirer so intimately as to have a very good guess at the subject of his meditation. Again, a man is likely to be thinking

of a woman, and a woman of a man, so the field of conjecture is limited. In answer to the first objection I may say that the crystal-gazer was among strangers, all of whom, myself included, she now saw for the first time. Nor could she have studied their histories beforehand, for she could not know (normally) when she left home, that she was about to be shown a glass ball, or whom she would meet. The second objection is met by the circumstance that ladies were *not* usually picked out for men, nor men for women. Indeed, these choices were the exceptions, and in each case were marked by minutely particular details. A third objection is that credulity, or the love of strange novelties, or desire to oblige, biases the inquirers, and makes them anxious to recognise something familiar in the scryer's descriptions. In the same way we know how people recognise faces in the most blurred and vague of spiritist photographs, or see family resemblances in the most rudimentary dough-faced babies. Take descriptions of persons in a passport, or in a proclamation sketching the personal appearance of a criminal. These fit the men or women intended, but they also fit a crowd of other people. The description given by the scryer then may come right by a fortuitous coincidence, or may be too credulously recognised.

The complex of coincidences, however, could not be attributed to chance selection out of the whole possible field of conjecture. We must remember, too, that a series of such hits increases, at an enormous rate, the odds against accidental conjecture. Of such mere luck I may give an example. I was writing a story of which the hero was George Kelly, one of the 'Seven Men of Moidart.' A year after composing my tale, I found the Government description of Mr. Kelly (1736). It exactly tallied with my purely fanciful sketch, down to eyes, and teeth, and face, except that I made my hero 'about six feet,' whereas the Government gave him five feet ten. But I knew beforehand that Mr. Kelly was a clergyman; his curious career proved him to be a person of great activity and geniality—and he was of Irish birth.



Even a dozen such guesses, equally correct, could not suggest any powers of 'vision,' when so much was known beforehand about the person guessed at. I now give cases in the experience of Miss Angus, as one may call the crystal-gazer. The first occurred the day after she got the glass ball for the first time. She writes:

'I.—A lady one day asked me to scry out a friend of whom she would think. Almost immediately I exclaimed "Here is an old, old lady looking at me with a triumphant smile on her face. She has a prominent nose and nut-cracker chin. Her face is very much wrinkled, especially at the sides of her eyes, as if she were always smiling. She is wearing a little white shawl with a black edge. *But!* . . . she *can't* be old as her hair is quite brown! although her face looks so very very old." The picture then vanished, and the lady said that I had accurately described her friend's *mother* instead of himself; that it was a family joke that the mother must dye her hair, it was so brown, and she was eighty-two years old. The lady asked me if the vision were distinct enough for me to recognise a likeness in the son's photograph; next day she laid several photographs before me, and in a moment, without the slightest hesitation I picked him out from his wonderful likeness to my vision!'

The inquirer verbally corroborated all the facts to me, within a week, but leaned to a theory of 'electricity.' She has read and confirms this account.

'II.—One afternoon I was sitting beside a young lady whom I had never seen or heard of before. She asked if she might look into my crystal, and while she did so I happened to look over her shoulder and saw a ship tossing on a very heavy choppy sea, although land was still visible in the dim distance. That vanished, and, as suddenly, a little house appeared with five or six (I forget now the exact number I then counted) steps leading up to the door. On the second step stood an old man reading a newspaper. In front of the house was a field of thick

stubbly grass where some *lambs*, I was going to say, but they were more like very small *sheep* . . . were grazing.

‘When the scene vanished, the young lady told me I had vividly described a spot in Shetland where she and her mother were soon going to spend a few weeks.’

I heard of this case from Miss Angus within a day or two of its occurrence, and it was then confirmed to me, verbally, by the other lady. She again confirms it (December 21, 1897). Both ladies had hitherto been perfect strangers to each other. The old man was the schoolmaster, apparently. In her MS., Miss Angus writes ‘*Skye*,’ but at the time both she and the other lady said Shetland (which I have restored). In Shetland the sheep, like the ponies, are small. Fortuitous coincidence, of course, may be invoked. The next account is by another lady, say Miss Rose.

‘III.—Writes Miss Rose—My first experience of crystal gazing was not a pleasant one, as will be seen from the following which I now relate as exactly as I can remember. I asked my friend, Miss Angus, to allow me to look in her crystal, and, after doing so for a short time, gave up, saying it was very unsatisfactory, as, although I saw a room with a bright fire in it and a bed all curtained and people coming and going, I could not make out who they were, so I returned the crystal to Miss Angus, with the request that she might look for me. She said at once, “I see a bed with a man in it looking very ill and a lady in black beside it.” Without saying any more Miss Angus still kept looking, and, after some time, I asked to have one more look, and on her passing the ball back to me, I received quite a shock, for there, perfectly clearly in a bright light, I saw stretched out in bed an old man apparently dead; for a few minutes I could not look, and on doing so once more there appeared a lady in black and out of dense darkness a long black object was being carried and it stopped before a dark opening overhung with rocks. At the time I saw this I was staying with cousins, and it was a Friday evening. On Sunday we heard of the death of the father-in-law of one of my

cousins ; of course I knew the old gentleman was very ill, but my thoughts were not in the least about him when looking in the crystal. I may also say I did not recognise in the features of the dead man those of the old gentleman whose death I mention. On looking again on Sunday, I once more saw the curtained bed and some people.'

I now give Miss Angus's version of this case, as originally received from her (December 1897). I had previously received an oral version, from a person present at the scrying. It differed, in one respect, from what Miss Angus writes. Her version is offered because it is made independently, without consultation, or attempt to reconcile recollections.

'At a recent experience of gazing, for the first time I was able to make another see what I saw in the crystal. Miss Rose called one afternoon, and begged me to look in the ball for her. I did so, and immediately exclaimed, "Oh ! here is a bed, with a man in it looking very ill [I saw he was dead, but refrained from saying so], and there is a lady dressed in black sitting beside the bed." I did not recognise the man to be anyone I knew, so I told her to look. In a very short time she called out, "Oh ! I see the bed too ! But, oh ! take it away, the man is *dead* !" She got quite a shock, and said she would never look in it again. Soon, however, curiosity prompted her to have one more look, and the scene at once came back again, and slowly, from a misty object at the side of the bed, the lady in black became quite distinct. Then she described several people in the room, and said they were carrying something all draped in black. When she saw this, she put the ball down and would not look at it again. She called again on Sunday (this had been on Friday) with her cousin, and we teased her about being *afraid* of the crystal, so she said she would just look in it once more. She took the ball, but immediately laid it down again, saying, "No, I won't look, as the bed with the awful man in it is there again !"

'When they went home, they heard that the cousin's

father-in-law had died that afternoon,<sup>1</sup> but to show he had never been in our thoughts, although we *all* knew he had not been well, *no one* suggested him ; his name was never mentioned in connection with the vision.'

'Clairvoyance,' of course, is not illustrated here, the corpse being unrecognised, and the coincidence, doubtless, accidental.

The next case is attested by a civilian, a slight acquaintance of Miss Angus's, who now saw him for the second time only, but better known to her family.

'IV.—On Thursday, March — ? 1897, I was lunching with my friends the Anguses, and during luncheon the conversation turned upon crystal balls and the visions that, by some people, can be seen in them. The subject arose owing to Miss Angus having just been presented with a crystal ball by Mr. Andrew Lang. I asked her to let me see it, and then to try and see if she could conjure up a vision of any person of whom I might think. . . . I fixed my mind upon a friend, a young trooper in the [regiment named], as I thought his would be a striking and peculiar personality, owing to his uniform, and also because I felt sure that Miss Angus could not possibly know of his existence. I fixed my mind steadily upon my friend, and presently Miss Angus, who had already seen two cloudy visions of faces and people, called out, "Now I see a man on a horse most distinctly ; he is dressed most queerly, and glitters all over—why, it's a soldier ! a soldier in uniform, but it's not an *officer*." My excitement on hearing this was so great that I ceased to concentrate my attention upon the thought of my friend, and the vision faded away and could not afterwards be recalled.—December 2, 1897.'

The witness gives the name of the trooper, whom he had befriended in a severe illness. Miss Angus's own account follows : she had told me the story in June 1897.

<sup>1</sup> Sunday afternoon. It is not implied that the pictures on Friday were *prophetic*. Probably Miss Rose saw what Miss Angus had seen by aid of 'suggestion.'

‘Shortly after I became the happy possessor of a “crystal” I managed to convert several very decided “sceptics,” and I will here give a short account of my experiences with two or three of them.

‘One was with a Mr. —, who was so determined to baffle me, he said he would think of a friend it would not be *possible* for me to describe!

‘I had only met Mr. — the day before, and knew almost nothing about him or his personal friends.

‘I took up the ball, which immediately became misty, and out of this mist gradually a crowd of people appeared, but too indistinctly for me to recognise anyone, until suddenly a man on horseback came galloping along. I remember saying, “I can’t describe what he is like, but he is dressed in a very queer way—in something so bright that the sun shining on him quite dazzles me, and I cannot make him out!” As he came nearer I exclaimed, “Why, it’s a *soldier* in shining armour, but it’s not an *officer*, only a soldier!” Two friends who were in the room said Mr. —’s excitement was intense, and my attention was drawn from the ball by hearing him call out, “It’s wonderful! it’s perfectly true! I was thinking of a young boy, a son of a crofter, in whom I am deeply interested, and who is a trooper in the — in London, which would account for the crowd of people round him in the street!”’

The next case is given, first in the version of the lady who was unconsciously scried for, and next in that of Miss Angus. The other lady writes:

‘V.—I met Miss A. for the first time in a friend’s house in the south of England, and one evening mention was made of a crystal ball, and our hostess asked Miss A. to look in it, and, if possible, tell her what was happening to a friend of hers. Miss A. took the crystal, and our hostess put her hand on Miss A.’s forehead to “will her.” I, not believing in this, took up a book and went to the other side of the room. I was suddenly very much startled to hear Miss A., in quite an agitated way, describe

a scene that had most certainly been very often in my thoughts, but of which I had never mentioned a word. She accurately described a race-course in Scotland, and an accident which happened to a friend of mine only a week or two before, and she was evidently going through the same doubt and anxiety that I did at the time as to whether he was actually killed or only very much hurt. It really was a most wonderful revelation to me, as it was the *very* first time I had seen a crystal. Our hostess, of course, was very much annoyed that she had not been able to influence Miss A., while I, who had appeared so very indifferent, should have affected her.—November 23, 1897.'

Miss Angus herself writes :

'Another case was a rather interesting one, as I somehow got inside the thoughts of *one* lady while *another* was doing her best to influence me !

'Miss —, a friend in Brighton, has strange "magnetic" powers, and felt quite sure of success with me and the ball.

'Another lady, Miss H., who was present, laughed at the whole thing, especially when Miss — insisted on holding my hand and putting her other hand on my forehead ! Miss H. in a scornful manner took up a book, and, crossing to the other side of the room, left us to our folly.

'In a very short time I felt myself getting excited, which had never happened before, when I looked in the crystal. I saw a crowd of people, and in some strange way I felt I was in it, and we all seemed to be waiting for something. Soon a rider came past, young, dressed for racing. His horse ambled past, and he smiled and nodded to those he knew in the crowd, and then was lost to sight.

'In a moment we all seemed to feel as if something had happened, and I went through great agony of suspense trying to see what seemed *just* beyond my view. Soon, however, two or three men approached, and carried him past before my eyes, and again my anxiety was

intense to discover if he were only very badly hurt or if life were really extinct. All this happened in a few moments, but long enough to have left me so agitated that I could not realise it had only been a vision in a glass ball.

'By this time Miss H. had laid aside her book, and came forward quite startled, and told me that I had accurately described a scene on a race-course in Scotland which she had witnessed just a week or two before—a scene that had very often been in her thoughts, but, as we were strangers to each other, she had never mentioned. She also said I had exactly described her own feelings at the time, and had brought it all back in a most vivid manner.

'The other lady was rather disappointed that, after she had concentrated her thoughts so hard, I should have been influenced instead by one who had jeered at the whole affair.'

[This anecdote was also told to me, within a few days of the occurrence, by Miss Angus. Her version was that she first saw a gentleman rider going to the post and nodding to his friends. Then she saw him carried on a stretcher through the crowd. She seemed, she said, to be actually present, and felt somewhat agitated. The fact of the accident was, later, mentioned to me in Scotland by another lady, a stranger to all the persons.—A. L.]

VI.—I may briefly add an experiment of December 21, 1897. A gentleman had recently come from England to the Scottish town where Miss Angus lives. He dined with her family, and about 10.15 to 10.30 p.m. she proposed to look in the glass for a scene or person of whom he was to think. He called up a mental picture of a ball at which he had recently been, and of a young lady to whom he had there been introduced. The lady's face, however, he could not clearly visualise, and Miss Angus reported nothing but a view of an empty ball-room, with polished floor and many lights. The gentleman made another effort, and remembered his partner with

some distinctness. Miss Angus then described another room, not a ball-room, comfortably furnished, in which a girl with brown hair drawn back from her forehead, and attired in a high-necked white blouse, was reading, or writing letters, under a bright light in an unshaded glass globe. The description of the features, figure, and height tallied with Mr. ——'s recollection; but he had never seen this Geraldine of an hour except in ball dress. He and Miss Angus noted the time by their watches (it was 10.30), and Mr. —— said that on the first opportunity he would ask the young lady how she had been dressed and how employed at that hour on December 21. On December 22 he met her at another dance, and her reply corroborated the crystal picture. She had been writing letters, in a high-necked white blouse, under an incandescent gas lamp with an unshaded glass globe. She was entirely unknown to Miss Angus, and had only been seen once by Mr. ——. Mr. —— and the lady of the crystal picture corroborated all this in writing.

I now suggested an experiment to Miss Angus, which, after all, was clearly not of a nature to establish a 'test' for sceptics. The inquirer was to write down, and inclose in an envelope, a statement of his thoughts; Miss Angus was to do the same with her description of the picture seen by her; and these documents were to be sent to me, without communication between the inquirer and the crystal-gazer. Of course, this could in no way prove absence of collusion, as the two parties might arrange privately beforehand what the vision was to be.

Indeed, nobody is apt to be convinced, or shaken, unless he is himself the inquirer and a stranger to the seeress, as the people in these experiments were. Evidence interesting to *them*—and, in a secondary degree, to others who know them—can thus be procured; but strangers are left to the same choice of doubts as in all reports of psychological experiences, 'chromatic audition,' views of coloured numerals, and the other topics illustrated by Mr. Galton's interesting researches.

In this affair of the envelopes the inquirer was a



Mr. Pembroke, who had just made Miss Angus's acquaintance, and was but a sojourner in the land. He wrote, before knowing what Miss Angus had seen in the ball :

'VII.—On Sunday, January 23, 1898, whilst Miss Angus was looking in the crystal ball, I was thinking of my brother, who was, I believe, at that time, somewhere between Sabathu (Punjab, India) and Egypt. I was anxious to know what stage of his journey he had reached.'

Miss Angus saw, and wrote, before telling Mr. Pembroke :

'A long and very white road, with tall trees at one side; on the other, a river or lake of greyish water. Blue sky, with a crimson sunset. A great black ship is anchored near, and on the deck I see a man lying, apparently very ill. He is a powerful-looking man, fair, and very much bronzed. Seven or eight Englishmen, in very light clothes, are standing on the road beside the boat.

'January 23, 1898.'

'A great black ship,' anchored in 'a river or lake,' naturally suggests the Suez Canal, where, in fact, Mr. Pembroke's brother was just arriving, as was proved by a letter received from him eight days after the experiment was recorded, on January 31. At that date Mr. Pembroke had not yet been told the nature of Miss Angus's crystal picture, nor had she any knowledge of his brother's whereabouts.

In February 1898, Miss Angus again came to the place where I was residing. We visited together the scene of an historical crime, and Miss Angus looked into the glass ball. It was easy for her to 'visualise' the incidents of the crime (the murder of Cardinal Beaton), for they are familiar enough to many people. What she did see in the ball was a tall, pale lady, 'about forty, but looking thirty-five,' with hair drawn back from the brows,

standing beside a high chair, dressed in a wide farthingale of stiff grey brocade, without a ruff. The costume corresponds well (as we found) with that of 1546, and I said, 'I suppose it is Mariotte Ogilvy'—to whom Miss Angus's historical knowledge (and perhaps that of the general public) did not extend. Mariotte was the Cardinal's lady-love, and was in the Castle on the night before the murder, according to Knox. She had been in my mind, whence (on the theory of thought transference) she may have passed to Miss Angus's mind; but I had never speculated on Mariotte's costume. Nothing but conjecture, of course, comes of these apparently 'retrospective' pictures; though a most singular and picturesque coincidence occurred, which may be told in a very different connection.

The next example was noted at the same town. The lady who furnishes it is well known to me, and it was verbally corroborated by Miss Angus, to whom the lady, her absent nephew, and all about her, were entirely strange.

'VIII.—I was very anxious to know whether my nephew would be sent to India this year, so I told Miss Angus that I had thought of something, and asked her to look in the glass ball. She did so, but almost immediately turned round and looked out of the window at the sea, and said, "I saw a ship so distinctly I thought it must be a reflection." She looked in the ball again, and said, "It is a large ship, and it is passing a huge rock with a lighthouse on it. I can't see who are on the ship, but the sky is very clear and blue. Now I see a large building, something like a club, and in front there are a great many people sitting and walking about. I think it must be some place abroad, for the people are all dressed in very light clothes, and it seems to be very sunny and warm. I see a young man sitting on a chair, with his feet straight out before him. He is not talking to anyone, but seems to be listening to something. He is dark and slight, and not very tall; and his eyebrows are dark and very distinctly marked."

'I had not had the pleasure of meeting Miss Angus before, and she knew nothing whatever about my nephew; but the young man described was exactly like him, both in his appearance and in the way he was sitting.'

In this case thought transference may be appealed to. The lady was thinking of her nephew in connection with India. It is not maintained, of course, that the picture was of a prophetic character.

The following examples have some curious and unusual features. On Wednesday, February 2, 1897, Miss Angus was looking in the crystal, to amuse six or seven people whose acquaintance she had that day made. A gentleman, Mr. Bissett, asked her 'what letter was in his pocket.' She then saw, under a bright sky, and, as it were, a long way off, a large building, in and out of which many men were coming and going. Her impression was that the scene must be abroad. In the little company present, it should be added, was a lady, Mrs. Cockburn, who had considerable reason to think of her young married daughter, then at a place about fifty miles away. After Miss Angus had described the large building and crowds of men, some one asked, 'Is it an exchange?' 'It might be,' she said. 'Now comes a man in a great hurry. He has a broad brow, and short, curly hair; <sup>1</sup> hat pressed low down on his eyes. The face is very serious; but he has a delightful smile.' Mr. and Mrs. Bissett now both recognised their friend and stockbroker, whose letter was in Mr. Bissett's pocket.

The vision, which interested Miss Angus, passed away, and was interrupted by that of a hospital nurse, and of a lady in a *peignoir*, lying on a sofa, *with bare feet*.<sup>2</sup> Miss Angus mentioned this vision as a bore, she being more interested in the stockbroker, who seems to have inherited what was once in the possession of another stockbroker—'the smile of Charles Lamb.' Mrs. Cockburn, for whom no pictures appeared, was rather vexed, and privately

<sup>1</sup> Miss Angus could not be sure of the colour of the hair.

<sup>2</sup> The position was such that Miss Angus could not see the face of the lady.

expressed with freedom a very sceptical opinion about the whole affair. But, on Saturday, February 5, 1897, Miss Angus was again with Mr. and Mrs. Bissett. When Mrs. Bissett announced that she had 'thought of something,' Miss Angus saw a walk in a wood or garden, beside a river, under a brilliant blue sky. Here was a lady, very well dressed, twirling a white parasol on her shoulder as she walked, in a curious 'stumpy' way, beside a gentleman in light clothes, such as are worn in India. He was broad-shouldered, had a short neck and a straight nose, and seemed to listen, laughing, but indifferent, to his obviously vivacious companion. The lady had a 'drawn' face, indicative of ill health. Then followed a scene in which the man, without the lady, was looking on at a number of Orientals busy in the felling of trees. Mrs. Bissett recognised, in the lady, her sister, Mrs. Clifton, in India—above all, when Miss Angus gave a realistic imitation of Mrs. Clifton's walk, the peculiarity of which was caused by an illness some years ago. Mrs. and Mr. Bissett also recognised their brother-in-law in the gentleman seen in both pictures. On being shown a portrait of Mrs. Clifton as a girl, Miss Angus said it was 'like, but too pretty.' A photograph done recently, however, showed her 'the drawn face' of the crystal picture.<sup>1</sup>

Next day, Sunday, February 6, Mrs. Bissett received, what was not usual—a letter from her sister in India, Mrs. Clifton, dated January 20. Mrs. Clifton described a place in a native State, where she had been at a great 'function,' in certain gardens beside a river. She added that they were going to another place for a certain purpose, 'and then we go into camp till the end of February.' One of Mr. Clifton's duties is to direct the clearing of wood preparatory to the formation of the camp, as in Miss Angus's crystal picture.<sup>2</sup> The sceptical

<sup>1</sup> I saw the photographs.

<sup>2</sup> I have been shown the letter of January 20, which confirmed the evidence of the crystal pictures. The camp was formed for official purposes in which Mr. Clifton was concerned. A letter of February 9 unconsciously corroborates.

Mrs. Cockburn heard of these coincidences, and an idea occurred to her. She wrote to her daughter, who has been mentioned, and asked whether, on Wednesday, February 2, she had been lying on a sofa in her bed-room, with bare feet. The young lady confessed that it was indeed so;<sup>1</sup> and, when she heard how the fact came to be known, expressed herself with some warmth on the abuse of glass balls, which tend to rob life of its privacy.

In this case the *prima facie* aspect of things is that a thought of Mr. Bissett's about his stockbroker, *dulce ridentem*, somehow reflected itself into Miss Angus's mind by way of the glass ball, and was interrupted by a thought of Mrs. Cockburn's, as to her daughter. But how these thoughts came to display the unknown facts concerning the garden by the river, the felling of trees for a camp, and the bare feet, is a question about which it is vain to theorise.<sup>2</sup>

On the vanishing of the jungle scene there appeared a picture of a man in a dark undress uniform, beside a great bay, in which were ships of war. Wooden huts, as in a plague district, were on shore. Mr. Bissett asked, 'What is the man's expression?' 'He looks as if he had been giving a lot of last orders.' Then appeared 'a place like a hospital, with five or six beds—no, berths: it is a ship. Here is the man again.' He was minutely described, one peculiarity being the way in which his hair grew—or, rather, did not grow—on his temples.

Miss Angus now asked, 'Where is my little lady?'—meaning the lady of the twirling parasol and *staccato* walk. 'Oh, I've left off thinking of her,' said Mrs. Bissett, who had been thinking of, and recognised in the officer in undress uniform, her brother, the man with the singular hair, whose face, in fact, had been scarred in that way by an encounter with a tiger. He was expected to sail from Bombay, but news of his setting forth has not

<sup>1</sup> The incident of the feet occurred at 4.30 to 7.30 P.M. The crystal picture was about 10 P.M.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Angus had only within the week made the acquaintance of Mrs. Cockburn and the Bissetts. Of these relations of theirs at a distance she had no knowledge.

been received (February 10) at the moment when this is written.<sup>1</sup>

In these Indian cases, 'thought transference' may account for the correspondence between the figures seen by Miss Angus and the ideas in the mind of Mr. and Mrs. Bissett. But the hypothesis of thought transference, while it would cover the wooden huts at Bombay (Mrs. Bissett knowing that her brother was about to leave that place), can scarcely explain the scene in the garden by the river and the scene with the trees. The incident of the bare feet may be regarded as a fortuitous coincidence, since Miss Angus saw the young lady foreshortened, and could not describe her face.

In the Introductory Chapter it was observed that the phenomena which apparently point to some unaccountable supernormal faculty of acquiring knowledge are 'trivial.' These anecdotes illustrate the triviality; but the facts certainly left a number of people, wholly unfamiliar with such experiments, under the impression that Miss Angus's glass ball was like Prince Ali's magical telescope in the 'Arabian Nights.'<sup>2</sup> These experiments, however, occasionally touch on intimate personal matters, and cannot be reported in such instances.

It will be remarked that the faculty is freakish, and does not always respond to conscious exertion of thought in the mind of the inquirer. Thus, in Case I. a connection of the person thought of is discerned; in another the mind of a stranger present seems to be read. In another case (not given here) the inquirer tried to visualise a card for a person present to guess, while Miss Angus was asked to describe an object which the inquirer was acquainted

<sup>1</sup> I have seen a photograph of this gentleman, Major Hamilton, which tallies with the full description given by Miss Angus, as reported by Mrs. Bissett. All the proper names here, as throughout, are altered.

This account I wrote from the verbal statement of Mrs. Bissett. It was then read and corroborated by herself, Mr. Bissett, Mr. Cockburn, Mrs. Cockburn, and Miss Angus, who added dates and signatures.

<sup>2</sup> The letters attesting each of these experiments are in my possession. The real names are in no case given in this account, by my own desire, but (with permission of the persons concerned) can be communicated privately.

with, but which he banished from his conscious thought. The double experiment was a double-barrelled success.

It seems hardly necessary to point out that chance coincidence will not cover this set of cases, where in each 'guess' the field of conjecture is boundless, and is not even narrowed by the crystal-gazer's knowledge of the persons for whose diversion she makes the experiment. As 'muscle-reading' is not in question (in the one case of contact between inquirer and crystal-gazer the results were unexpected), and as no unconsciously made signs could convey, for example, the idea of a cavalry soldier in uniform, or an accident on a race-course in two *tableaux*, I do not at present see any more plausible explanation than that of thought transference, though how that is to account for some of the cases given I do not precisely understand.

Any one who can accept the assurance of my personal belief in the good faith of all concerned will see how very useful this faculty of crystal-gazing must be to the Apache or Australian medicine-man or Polynesian priest. Freakish as the faculty is, a few real successes, well exploited and eked out by fraud, would set up a wizard's reputation. That a faculty of being thus affected is genuine seems proved, apart from modern evidence, by the world-wide prevalence of crystal-gazing in the ethnographic region. But the discovery of this prevalence had not been made, to my knowledge, before modern instances induced me to notice the circumstances, sporadically recorded in books of travel.

The phenomena are certainly of a kind to encourage the savage theory of the wandering soul. How else, thinkers would say, can the seer visit the distant place or person, and correctly describe men and scenes which, in the body, he never saw? Or they would encourage the Polynesian belief that the 'spirit' of the thing or person looked for is suspended by a god over the water, crystal, blood, ink, or whatever it may be. Thus, to anthropologists, the discovery of crystal-gazing as a thing widely diffused and still flourishing ought to be grateful, however much they

may blame my childish credulity. I may add that I have no ground to suppose that crystal-gazing will ever be of practical service to the police or to persons who have lost articles of portable property. But I have no objection to experiments being made at Scotland Yard.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The faculty of seeing 'fancy pictures' in the glass is far from uncommon. I have only met with three other persons besides Miss Angus, two of them men, who had any success in 'telepathic' crystal-gazing. In correcting 'revises' (March 16), I learn that the brother of Mr. Pembroke (p. 105) wrote from Cairo on January 27. The 'sery' of January 23 represented his ship in the Suez Canal. He was, as his letter shows, in quarantine at Suez, at Moses's Wells, from January 25 to January 26. Major Hamilton (pp. 109, 110), on the other hand, left Bombay, indeed, but not by sea, as in the crystal-picture. See Appendix C.

Mr. Starr, an American critic, adds Cherokees, Aztecs, and Tonkaways to the ranks of crystal gazers.



## VI

## ANTHROPOLOGY AND HALLUCINATIONS

WE have been examining cases, savage or civilised, in which knowledge is believed to be acquired through no known channel of sense. All such instances among savages, whether of the nature of clairvoyance simple, or by aid of gazing in a smooth surface, or in dreams, or in trance, or through second sight, would confirm if they did not originate the belief in the separable soul. The soul, if it is to visit distant places and collect information, must leave the body, it would be argued, and must so far be capable of leading an independent life. Perhaps we ought next to study cases of 'possession,' when knowledge is supposed to be conveyed by an alien soul, ghost, spirit, or god, taking up its abode in a man, and speaking out of his lips. But it seems better first to consider the alleged supernatural phenomena which may have led the savage reasoner to believe that *he* was not the only owner of a separable soul : that other people were equally gifted.

The sense, as of separation, which a savage dreamer or seer would feel after a dream or vision in which he visited remote places, would satisfy him that *his* soul, at least, was volatile. But some experience of what he would take to be visits from the spirits of others, would be needed before he recognised that other men, as well as he, had the faculty of sending their souls a journeying.

Now, ordinary dreams, in which the dreamer seemed

to see persons who were really remote, would supply to the savage reasoner a certain amount of affirmative evidence. It is part of Mr. Tylor's contention that savages (like some children) are subject to the difficulty which most of us may have occasionally felt in deciding 'Did this really happen, or did I dream it?' Thus, ordinary dreams would offer to the early thinker some evidence that other men's souls could visit his, as he believes that his can visit them.

But men, we may assume, were not, at the assumed stage of thought, so besotted as not to take a great practical distinction between sleeping and waking experience on the whole. As has been shown, the distinction is made by the lowest savages of our acquaintance. One clear *waking* hallucination, on the other hand, of the presence of a person really absent, could not but tell more with the early philosopher than a score of dreams, for to be easily forgotten is of the essence of a dream. Savages, indeed, oddly enough, have hit on our theory, 'dreams go by contraries.' Dr. Callaway illustrates this for the Zulus, and Mr. Scott for the Mang'anza. Thus they *do* discriminate between sleeping and waking. We must therefore examine *waking* hallucinations in the field of actual experience, and on such recent evidence as may be accessible. If these hallucinations agree, in a certain ratio, beyond what fortuitous coincidence can explain, with real but unknown events, then such hallucinations would greatly strengthen, in the mind of an early thinker, the savage theory that a man at a distance may, voluntarily or involuntarily, project his spirit on a journey, and be seen where he is not present.

When Mr. Tylor wrote his book, the study of the occasional waking hallucinations of the sane and healthy was in its infancy. Much, indeed, had been written about hallucinations, but these were mainly the chronic false perceptions of maniacs, of drunkards, and of persons in bad health such as Nicolai and Mrs. A. The hallucinations of persons of genius—Jeanne d'Arc, Luther, Socrates, Pascal, were by some attributed to lunacy in these famous

people. Scarcely any writers before Mr. Galton had recognised the occurrence of hallucinations once in a life, perhaps, among healthy, sober, and mentally sound people. If these were known to occur, they were dismissed as dreams of an unconscious sleep. This is still practically the hypothesis of Dr. Parish, as we shall see later. But in the last twenty years the infrequent hallucinations of the sane have been recognised by Mr. Galton, and discussed by Professor James, Mr. Gurney, Dr. Parish, and many other writers.

Two results have followed. First, 'ghosts' are shown to be, when not illusions caused by mistaking one object for another, then hallucinations. As these most frequently represent a living person who is not present, by parity of reason the appearance of a dead person is on the same level, is not a space-filling 'ghost,' but merely an hallucination. Such an appearance can, *prima facie*, suggest no reasonable inference as to the continued existence of the dead. On the other hand, the new studies have raised the perhaps insoluble question, 'Do not hallucinations of the sane, representing the living, coincide more frequently than mere luck can account for, with the death or other crisis of the person apparently seen?' If this could be proved, then there would seem to be a causal *nexus*, a relation of cause and effect between the hallucination and the coincident crisis. That connection would be provisionally explained by some not understood action of the mind or brain of the person in the crisis, on that of the person who has the hallucination. This is no new idea; only the name, Telepathy, is modern. Of course, if all this were accepted, it would be the next step to ask whether hallucinations representing the dead show any signs of being caused by some action on the side of the departed. That is a topic on which the little that we have to say must be said later.

In the meantime the reader who has persevered so far is apt to go no further. The prejudice against 'wraiths' and 'ghosts' is very strong; but, then, our innocent phantasms are neither (as we understand their nature)

ghosts nor wraiths. Kant broke the edges of his metaphysical tools against, not these phantasms, but the logically inconceivable entities which were at once material and non-material, at once 'spiritual' and 'space-filling.' There is no such difficulty about hallucinations, which, whatever else may be said about them, are familiar facts of experience. The only real objections are the statements that hallucinations are always *morbid* (which is no longer the universal belief of physiologists and psychologists), and that the alleged coincidences of a phantasm of a person with the unknown death of that person at a distance are 'pure flukes.' That is the question to which we recur later.

In the meantime, the defenders of the theory, that there is some not understood connection of cause and effect between the death or other crisis at one end and the perception representing the person affected by the crisis at the other end, point out that such hallucinations, or other effects on the percipient, exist in a regular rising scale of potency and perceptibility. Suppose that 'A's' death in Yorkshire is to affect the consciousness of 'B' in Surrey before he knows anything about the fact (suppose it for the sake of argument), then the effect may take place (1) on 'B's' emotions, producing a vague *malaise* and gloom; (2) on his motor nerves, urging him to some act; (3) or may translate itself into his senses, as a touch felt, a voice heard, a figure seen; or (4) may render itself as a phrase or an idea.

Of these, (1) the emotional effect is, of course, the vaguest. We may all have had a sudden fit of gloom which we could not explain. People rarely act on such impressions, and, when they do, are often wrong. Thus a friend of my own was suddenly so overwhelmed, at golf, with inexplicable misery (though winning his match) that he apologised to his opponent and walked home from the ninth hole. Nothing was wrong at home. Probably some real ground of apprehension had obscurely occurred to his mind and expressed itself in his emotion.

But one may illustrate what did look like a coincidence by the experience of the same friend. He inhabited, as a

young married man, a flat in a house belonging to an acquaintance. The hall was covered by a kind of glass roof, over part of its extent. He was staying in the country with his wife, and as they travelled home the lady was beset with an irresistible conviction that something terrible had occurred, *not* to her children. On reaching their house they found that one of their maids had fallen through the glass roof and killed herself. They also learned that the girl's sister had arrived at the house, immediately after the accident, explaining that she was driven to come by a sense that something dreadful had happened. The lawyer, too, who represented the owner of the house, had appeared, unsummoned, from a conviction, which he could not resist, that for some reason unknown he was wanted there.<sup>1</sup> Here, then, was not an hallucination, but an emotional effect simultaneously reaching the consciousness of three persons, and coinciding with an unknown crisis.<sup>2</sup>

Cases in which a person feels urged to an act (2) are also recorded. Indeed, the lawyer's in our anecdote is such an instance. Not to trouble ourselves (3) with 'voices,' hallucinations of sight, coinciding with a distant unknown crisis, are traced from a mere feeling that somebody is in the room, followed by a *mental*, or *mind's eye* picture of a person dying at a distance, up to a kind of 'vision' of a person or scene, and so on to hallucinations appealing, at once, to touch, sight, and hearing. As some hundreds of these narratives of coincidental hallucinations in every degree have been collected from witnesses at first hand, often personally known, and usually personally cross-questioned, by the student, it is difficult to deny that there is a *prima facie* case for inquiry.<sup>3</sup>

There is here no question of 'spirits,' with all their

<sup>1</sup> The lady, her husband, and the lawyer, all known to me, gave me the story in writing; the servant's sister has been lost sight of.

<sup>2</sup> See three other cases in *Proceedings*, S.P.R., ii. 122, 123. Two others are offered by Mr. Henry James and Mr. J. Neville Maskelyne of the Egyptian Hall.

<sup>3</sup> See 'Phantasms of the Living' and 'A Theory of Apparitions,' *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. ii., by Messrs. Gurney and Myers.

physical and metaphysical difficulties. Nor is there any desire to shirk the fact that many 'presentiments' and hallucinations of the sane coincide with no ascertainable fact. We only provisionally posit the possibility of an influence, in its nature unknown, of one mind on another at a distance, such influence translating itself into an hallucination. An inquiry into this subject, in the ethnographic and modern fields, may be new but involves no 'superstition.'

We now return to Mr. Tylor, who treats of hallucinations among other experiences which led early savage thinkers to believe in ghosts or separable souls, the origin of religion.

As to the causes of hallucinations in general, Mr. Tylor has something to say, but it is nothing systematic. 'Sickness, exhaustion, and excitement' cause savages to behold 'human spectres,' in 'the objective reality' of which they believe. But if an educated modern, not sick, nor exhausted, nor excited, has an hallucination of a friend's presence, he, too, believes that it is 'objective,' is his friend in flesh and blood, till he finds out his mistake, by examination or reflection. As Professor William James remarks, in his 'Principles of Psychology,' such solitary hallucinations of the sane and healthy, once in a life-time, are difficult to account for, and are by no means rare. 'Sometimes,' Mr. Tylor observes, 'the phantom has the characteristic quality of not being visible to all of an assembled company,' and he adds 'to assert or imply that they are visible sometimes, and to some persons, but not always, or to everyone, is to lay down an explanation of facts which is not, indeed, our usual modern explanation, but which is a perfectly rational and intelligible product of early science.'

It is, indeed, nor has later science produced any rational and intelligible explanation of collective hallucinations, shared by several persons at once, and perhaps not perceived by others who are present. Mr. Tylor, it is true, asserts that 'in civilised countries a rumour of some one having seen a phantom is enough to bring a sight of

it to others whose minds are in a properly receptive state.' But this is arguing in a circle. What is 'a properly receptive state'? If illness, overwork, 'expectant attention,' make 'a properly receptive state,' I should have seen several phantoms in several 'haunted houses.' But the only thing of the sort I ever saw occurred when I was thinking of nothing less, when I was in good health, and when I did not know (nor did I learn till long after) that it was the right and usual phantom to see. Mr. Podmore remarks that various members of the Psychical Society have sojourned in various 'haunted houses,' 'some of them in a state of expectancy and nervous excitement,' which never caused them to see phantoms, for they saw none.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Tylor treats of waking hallucinations in much the same manner as he deals with 'travelling clairvoyance.' He does not study them 'in the field of experience.' He is not concerned with the truth of the facts, important as we think it would be, but with his theory that hallucinations, among other causes, would naturally give rise to the belief in spirits, and thus to the early philosophy of Animism. Now, certainly, the hallucination of a person's presence, say at the moment of his death at a distance, would suggest to a savage that something of the dying man's, something symbolised in the word 'shadow,' or 'breath' (*spiritus*), had come to say farewell. The modern 'spiritualistic' theory, again, that the dead man's 'spirit' is actually present to the percipient, in space, corresponds to, and is derived from, the animistic philosophy of the savage. But we may believe in such 'death-wraiths,' or hallucinatory appearances of the dying, without being either savages or spiritualists. We may believe without pretending to explain, or we may advance the theory of 'Telepathy,' Hegel's 'magical tie,' according to which the distant mind somehow impresses itself, in a more or less perfect hallucination, on the mind of the person who perceives the wraith. If this be so, or even if no explanation be offered, the truth of the stories of

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Psychical Research*, p. 333.

coincidental apparitions becomes important, as pointing to a new region of psychical inquiry. Then the evidence of savages as to hallucinations of their own, coincident with the death of their absent friends, will confirm, *quantum valeat*, the evidence of many modern observers in all ranks of life, and all degrees of culture, from Lord Brougham to an old nurse.<sup>1</sup>

As to hallucinations coincident with the death of the person apparently seen, Mr. Tylor says: 'Narratives of this class I can here only specify without arguing on them, they are abundantly in circulation.'<sup>2</sup> Now, the modern hallucinations themselves can scarcely, perhaps, be called 'survivals from savagery,' though the opinion that an hallucination of a person must be his 'spirit' is really such a survival. It is with that opinion, with Animism in its hallucinatory origins, that Mr. Tylor is concerned, not with the hallucinations themselves or with the evidence for their veridical existence.

Mr. Tylor gives three anecdotes, narrated to him, in two cases, by the seers, of phantasms of the living beheld by them (and in one case by a companion also) when the real person was dying at a distance. He adds: 'My own view is that nothing but dreams and visions could have ever put into men's minds such an idea as that of souls being ethereal images of bodies.'<sup>3</sup> The idea may be perfectly erroneous; but if the occurrence of such coincidental appearances as Mr. Tylor tells us about could be shown to be too frequent for mere chance to produce, then there would be a presumption in favour of some unknown faculties in our nature—a proper theme for anthropology.

<sup>1</sup> This, at least, seems to myself a not illogical argument. Mr. Leaf has argued on the other side, that 'Darwinism may have done something for Totemism, by proving the existence of a great monkey kinship. But Totemism can hardly be quoted as evidence for Darwinism.' True, but Darwinism and Totemism are matters of opinion, not facts of personal experience. To a believer in coincidental hallucinations, at least, the alleged parallel experiences of savages must yield some confirmation to his own. *His* belief, he thinks, is warranted by human experience. On what does he suppose that the belief of the savage is based? Do *his* experience and their belief coincide by pure chance?

<sup>2</sup> *Prim. Cult.* i. 449.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 450.



The hallucinations of which we hear most are those in which a person sees the phantom of another person, who, unknown to him, is in or near the hour of death. Mr. Tylor, in addition to his three instances in civilised life, alludes to one in savage life, with references to other cases.<sup>1</sup> We turn to his savage instance, offering it at full length from the original.<sup>2</sup>

‘Among the Maoris’ (says Mr. Shortland) ‘it is always ominous to see the figure of an absent person. If the figure is very shadowy, and its face is not seen, death, although he may ere long be expected, has not seized his prey. If the face of the absent person is seen, the omen forewarns the beholder that he is already dead.’

The following statement is from the mouth of an eyewitness :

‘A party of natives left their village, with the intention of being absent some time, on a pig-hunting expedition. One night, while they were seated in the open air around a blazing fire, the figure of a relative who had been left ill at home was seen to approach. The apparition appeared to two of the party only, and vanished immediately on their making an exclamation of surprise. When they returned to the village they inquired for the sick man, and then learnt that he had died about the time he was said to have been seen.’

I now give Maori cases, communicated to me by Mr. Tregear, F.R.G.S., author of a ‘Maori Comparative Dictionary.’

A very intelligent Maori chief said to me, ‘I have seen but two ghosts. I was a boy at school in Auckland, and one morning was asleep in bed when I found myself aroused by some one shaking me by the shoulder. I looked up, and saw bending over me the well-known form of my uncle, whom I supposed to be at the Bay of Islands. I spoke to him, but the form became dim and vanished. The next mail brought me the news of his

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* vol. i. p. 450.

<sup>2</sup> From Shortland’s *Traditions of New Zealand*, p. 140.

death. Years passed away, and I saw no ghost or spirit—not even when my father and mother died, and I was absent in each case. Then one day I was sitting reading, when a dark shadow fell across my book. I looked up, and saw a man standing between me and the window. His back was turned towards me. I saw from his figure that he was a Maori, and I called out to him, “Oh friend!” He turned round, and I saw my other uncle, Ihaka. The form faded away as the other had done. I had not expected to hear of my uncle’s death, for I had seen him hale and strong a few hours before. However, he had gone into the house of a missionary, and he (with several white people) was poisoned by eating of a pie made from tinned meat, the tin having been opened and the meat left in it all night. That is all I myself had seen of spirits.’

One more Maori example may be offered :<sup>1</sup>

From Mr. Francis Dart Fenton, formerly in the Native Department of the Government, Auckland, New Zealand. He gave the account in writing to his friend, Captain J. H. Crosse, of Monkstown, Cork, from whom we received it. In 1852, when the incident occurred, Mr. Fenton was ‘engaged in forming a settlement on the banks of the Waikato.’

‘March 25, 1860.

‘Two sawyers, Frank Philps and Jack Mulholland, were engaged cutting timber for the Rev. R. Maunsell at the mouth of the Awaroa creek—a very lonely place, a vast swamp, no people within miles of them. As usual, they had a Maori with them to assist in felling trees. He came from Tihorewam, a village on the other side of the river, about six miles off. As Frank and the native were cross-cutting a tree, the native stopped suddenly, and said, “What are you come for?” looking in the direction of Frank. Frank replied, “What do you mean?” He said, “I am not speaking to you; I am speaking to my brother.” Frank said, “Where is he?” The native

<sup>1</sup> Gurney and Myers, ‘Phantasms of the Living,’ vol. ii. ch. v. p. 557.

replied, "Behind you. What do you want?" (to the other Maori). Frank looked round and saw nobody. The native no longer saw anyone, but laid down the saw and said, "I shall go across the river; my brother is dead."

'Frank laughed at him, and reminded him that he had left him quite well on Sunday (five days before), and there had been no communication since. The Maori spoke no more, but got into his canoe and pulled across. When he arrived at the landing-place, he met people coming to fetch him. His brother had just died. I knew him well.'

In answer to inquiries as to his authority for this narrative, Mr. Fenton writes:

'December 18, 1883.

'I knew all the parties concerned well, and it is quite true, *valeat quantum*, as the lawyers say. Incidents of this sort are not infrequent among the Maoris.

'F. D. FENTON,

'Late Chief Judge, Native Law-Court of N.Z.'

Here is a somewhat analogous example from Tierra del Fuego:

'Jemmy Button was very superstitious' (says Admiral Fitzroy, speaking of a Fuegian brought to England). 'While at sea, on board the "Beagle," he said one morning to Mr. Bynoe that in the night some man came to the side of his hammock and whispered in his ear that his father was dead. He fully believed that such was the case,' and he was perfectly right. . . . 'He reminded Bennett of the dream.'<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Darwin also mentions this case, a coincidental auditory hallucination.

I have found no other savage cases quite to the point. This is, undeniably, 'a pair show for Kirkintilloch,' a meagre collection of savage death-wraiths, but it may be so meagre by reason of want of research, or of lack of records, travellers usually pooh-poohing the benighted

<sup>1</sup> The 'Adventure' and 'Beagle,' iii. 181, cf. 204.

superstitions of the heathen, or fearing to seem superstitious if they chronicle instances. However few the instances, they are, undeniably, exact parallels to those recorded in civilised life.

In filling up the lacuna in Mr. Tylor's anthropological work, in asking questions as to the proportion between phantasms of the living which coincide with a crisis in the experience of the person seen, and those which do not, it is obviously necessary to reject all evidence of people who were ill, or anxious, or overworked, or in poignant grief at the time of the hallucination. It will be seen later that neither grief nor amatory passion (dominating the association of our ideas as they do) beget many phantasms. Our business, however, is with the false perceptions of persons trustworthy, as far as we know, sane, healthy, not usually visionary, and in an unperturbed state of mind.

There remains a normal cause of subjective hallucinations, expectancy. This appears to be a real cause of hallucination or, at least, of illusion. Waiting for the sound of a carriage you may hear it often before it comes, you taking other sounds for that which you desire. Again, in an inquiry embracing 17,000 people, the S.P.R. collected thirteen cases of an hallucinatory appearance of one person to another who was *expecting* his arrival. Once more, it is very conceivable that a trifle, the accidental opening of a door, a noise of a familiar kind in an unfamiliar place, may touch the brain into originating an hallucination of a person passing through the door, or of the place where the sound now heard used once to be familiar. Expectancy, again, and nervousness, might doubtless cause an hallucination to a person who felt uncomfortable in a house with a name to be 'haunted,' though, as we have seen, the effect is far less common than the cause. All these sorts of causes are undoubtedly more apt to be prevalent among superstitious savages than among educated Europeans. And it stands to reason that savages, where one man 'thinks he sees something,' will be readier than we are to think they 'see something' too. Yet collective hallucinations, which are shared by several persons at once, are

especially puzzling. Even if they occur when all are in a strained condition of expectancy, it is odd that all see them in *the same way*.<sup>1</sup> Examples will occur later. When there is no excitement, the mystery is increased. We may note that, among the expectant multitudes who looked on while Bernadette was viewing the Blessed Virgin at Lourdes, not one person, however superstitious or hysterical, pretended to share the vision. Again, only one person, and he on doubtful evidence, is asserted to have shared, once, the visions of Jeanne d'Arc. In both cases all the conditions said to produce collective hallucination were present in the highest degree. Yet no collective hallucination occurred.

Narratives about hallucinations coincident with a death, narratives well attested, are abundant in modern times, so abundant that one need only refer the curious to Messrs. Gurney and Myers's two large volumes, 'Phantasms of the Living,' and to the S.P.R. 'Report of Census of Hallucinations' (1894). Mr. Tylor says: 'The spiritualistic theory specially insists on cases of apparitions, where the person's death corresponds more or less nearly with the time when some friend perceives his phantom.' But visionaries, he remarks truly, often see phantoms of living persons when nothing occurs. That is the case, and the question arises whether more such phantoms are viewed (*not* by 'visionaries') in connection with the death or other crisis of the person whose hallucinatory appearance is perceived, than ought to occur, if there be no connection of some unknown cause between deaths and appearances. As Mr. Tylor observes, 'Man, as yet in a low intellectual condition, came to associate in thought those things which he found by experience to be connected in fact.'<sup>2</sup> Did early man, then, find *in experience* that apparitions of his friends were 'connected in fact' with their deaths? And, if so, was that discovered connection in fact the origin of his belief that an hallucinatory appearance of an absent person sometimes announced his death?

<sup>1</sup> It will, of course, be said that they worked their stories into conformity.

<sup>2</sup> *Prim. Cult.* i. 116.

That the belief exists in New Zealand we saw, and find confirmed by this instance, one of 'many such relations,' says the author. A Maori chief was long absent on the war-path. One day he entered his wife's hut, and sat mute by the hearth. She ran to bring witnesses, but on her return the phantasm was no longer visible. The woman soon afterwards married again. Her husband then returned in perfect health, and pardoned the lady, as she had acted on what, to a Maori mind, seemed good legal evidence of his decease. Of course, even if she fabled, the story is evidence to the existence of the belief.<sup>1</sup>

What, then, is the cause of the belief that a phantom of a man is a token of his death? On the theory of savage philosophy, as explained by Mr. Tylor himself, a man's soul may leave his body and become visible to others, not at death only, but on many other occasions, in dream, trance, lethargy. All these are much more frequent conditions, in every man's career, than the fact of dying. Why, then, is the phantasm supposed by savages to announce death? Is it because, in a sufficient ratio of cases to provoke remark, early man has found the appearance and the death to be 'things connected in fact'?

I give an instance in which the philosophy of savages would lead them *not* to connect a phantasm of a living man with his death.

The Woi Worung, an Australian tribe, hold that 'the Murup [wraith] of an individual could be sent from him by magic, as, for instance, when a hunter incautiously went to sleep when out hunting.'<sup>2</sup> In this case the hunter is exposed to the magic of his enemies. But the Murup, or detached soul, would be visible to people at a distance when its owner is only asleep—according to the savage philosophy. Why, then, when the wraith is seen, is the owner believed to be dying? Are the things bound to be 'connected in fact'?

As is well known, the Society for Psychical Research has attempted a little census, for the purpose of discover-

<sup>1</sup> Polack's *Manners of the New Zealanders*, i. 268.

<sup>2</sup> Howitt, *op. cit.* p. 186.

ing whether hallucinations representing persons at a distance coincided, within twelve hours, with their deaths, in a larger ratio than the laws of chance allow as possible. If it be so, the Maori might have some ground for his theory that such hallucinations betoken a decease. I do not believe that any such census can enable us to reach an affirmative conclusion which science will accept. In spite of all precautions taken, all warnings before, and 'allowances' made later, collectors of evidence will 'select' affirmative cases already known, or (which is equally fatal) will be suspected of doing so. Again, illusions of memory, increasing the closeness of the coincidence, will come in—or it will be easy to say that they came in. 'Allowances' for them will not be accepted.

Once more, 17,000 cases, though a larger number than is usual in biological inquiries, are decidedly not enough for a popular argument on probabilities; a million, it will be said, would not be too many. Finally, granting honesty, accurate memory, and non-selection (none of which will be granted by opponents), it is easy to say that odd things *must* occur, and that the large proportion of affirmative answers as to coincidental hallucinations is just a specimen of these odd things.

Other objections are put forward by teachers of popular science who have not examined—or, having examined, misreport—the results of the Census in detail. I may give an example of their method.

Mr. Edward Clodd is the author of several handbooks of science—'The Story of Creation,' 'A Manual of Evolution,' and others. Now, in a signed review of a book, a critique published in 'The Sketch' (October 13, 1897), Mr. Clodd wrote about the Census: 'Thousands of persons were asked whether they had ever seen apparitions, and out of these some hundreds, mostly unintelligent foreigners, replied in the affirmative. Some eight or ten of the number—envied mortals—had seen "angels," but the majority, like the American in the mongoose story, had seen only "snakes." . . . In weighing evidence we have to take into account the competency

as well as the integrity of the witnesses.' Mr. Clodd has most frankly and good-humouredly acknowledged the erroneousness of his remark. Otherwise we might ask: Does Mr. Clodd prefer to be considered not 'competent' or not 'veracious'? He cannot be both on this occasion, for his signed and published remarks were absolutely inaccurate. First, thousands of persons were *not* asked 'whether they had seen apparitions.' They were asked: 'Have you ever, when believing yourself to be perfectly awake, had a vivid impression of seeing, or being touched by a living being or inanimate object, or of hearing a voice; which impression, so far as you could discover, was not due to any external physical cause?' Secondly, it is not the fact that 'some hundreds, *mostly unintelligent foreigners*, replied in the affirmative.' Of English-speaking men and women, 1,499 answered the question quoted above in the affirmative. Of foreigners (naturally 'unintelligent'), 185 returned affirmative answers. Thirdly, when Mr. Clodd says, 'The majority had seen only "snakes,"' it is not easy to know what precise sense 'snakes' bears in the terminology of popular science. If Mr. Clodd means, by 'snakes,' fantastic hallucinations of animals, these amounted to 25, as against 830 representing human forms of persons recognised, unrecognised, living or dead. But, if by 'snakes' Mr. Clodd means purely subjective hallucinations, not known to coincide with any event—and this is his meaning—his statement agrees with that of the Census. His observations, of course, were purely accidental errors.

The number of hallucinations representing living or dying recognised persons in the answers received, was 352. Of first-hand cases, in which coincidence of the hallucination with the death of the person apparently seen was affirmed, there were 80, of which 26 are given.

The non-coincidental hallucinations were multiplied by four, to allow for forgetfulness of 'misses.' The results being compared, it was decided that the hallucinations collected coincided with death 440 more often than ought to be the



case by the law of probabilities. Therefore there was proof, or presumption, in favour of some relation of cause and effect between A's death and B's hallucination.

If we were to attack the opinion of the Committee on Hallucinations, that 'Between deaths and apparitions of the dying a connection exists which is not due to chance alone,' the assault should be made not only on the method, but on the details. The events were never of very recent, and often were of remote occurrence. The remoteness was less than it seems, however, as the questions were often answered several years before the publication of the Report (1894). There was scarcely any documentary evidence, any note or letter written between the hallucination and the arrival of news of the death. Such letters, the evidence alleged, had in some cases existed, but had been lost, burnt, eaten by white ants, or written on a sheet of blotting paper or the whitewashed wall of a barrack room. If I may judge by my own lifelong success in mislaying, losing, and casually destroying papers, from cheques to notes made for literary purposes, from interesting letters of friends to the manuscripts of novelists, or if I may judge by Sir Walter Scott's triumphs of the same kind, I should not think much of the disappearance of documentary evidence to death-wraiths. Nobody supposed, when these notes were written, that Science would ask for their production; and even if people had guessed at this, it is human to lose or destroy old papers.

The remoteness of the occurrences is more remarkable, for, if these things happen, why were so few recent cases discovered? Again, the seers were sometimes under anxiety, though such cases were excluded from the final computation: they frequently knew that the person seen was in bad health: they were often very familiar with his personal aspect. Now what are called 'subjective hallucinations,' non-coincidental hallucinations, usually represent persons very familiar to us, persons much in our minds. I know seven cases in which such hallucinations occurred. 1, 2, of husband to wife;

3, son to mother; 4, brother to sister; 5, sister to sister; 6, cousin (living in the same house) to cousin; 7, friend (living a mile away) to two friends. In no case was there a death-coincidence. Only in case 4 was there any kind of coincidence, the brother having intended to do (unknown to the sister) what he was seen doing—driving in a dog-cart with a lady. But he had *not* driven. We cannot, of course, *prove* that these seven cases were *not* telepathic, but there is no proof that they were. Now most of the coincidental cases, on which the Committee relied as their choicest examples, represented persons familiarly known to the seers. This looks as if they were casual; but, of course, if telepathy does exist, it is most likely (as Hegel says) to exist between kinsfolk and friends.<sup>1</sup>

The dates might be fresher!

In case 1, percipient knew that his aunt in England (he being in Australia) was not very well. No anxiety.

2. Casual acquaintance. No anxiety. Case of accident or suicide.

3. Acquaintance who feared to die in childbed, and did. Percipient not much interested, nor at all anxious.

4. Father in England to son in India. No anxiety.

5. Uncle to niece. Sudden death. No anxiety. No knowledge of illness.

6. Brother-in-law to sister-in-law, and her maid. No anxiety reported. *Russian*.

7. Father to son. No anxiety reported. *Russian*.

8. Friend to friend. No knowledge of illness or anxiety reported.

9. Grandmother to grandson. No anxiety. No knowledge of illness.

10. Casual acquaintance, to seven people, and apparently to a dog. Illness known. *Russian*.

11. Step-brother to step-brother. No anxiety. No knowledge of illness.

<sup>1</sup> On examining the cases, we find, in 1894, these dates of reported occurrences, in twenty-eight cases: 1890, 1882, 1879, 1876, 1863, 1861, 1888, 1885, 1881, 1880, 1878, 1874, 1869, 1869, 1845, 1887, 1881, 1877, 1874, 1873, 1860 (?), 1864 (?), 1855, 1830 (?!), 1867, 1862, 1888, 1879.

12. Friend to friend. No anxiety or knowledge of illness.

13. Casual acquaintance. No anxiety.

14. Aunt to nephew and to his wife. Illness known. No anxiety.

15. Sister to brother. Illness known. No anxiety.

16. Father to daughter. No knowledge of illness. No anxiety.

17. Father to son. Much anxiety. (Uncounted.)

18. Sister to sister. Illness known. 'No immediate danger' surmised.

19. Father to son. Much anxiety. *Russian*. (Uncounted.)

20. Friend to friend. Illness known. Percipient had been nursing patient. *Brazilian*. (Very bad case!)

21. Friend to friend. Illness known. No anxiety.

22. Brother to brother. Illness known. No anxiety.

23. Grandfather to grand-daughter. Illness known. No pressing anxiety.

24. Grandfather to grandson. Illness known. No anxiety.

25. Father's *hand*. Illness chronic. No anxiety. Percipient a daughter. *Russian*.

26. Husband to wife. Anxiety in time of war.

27. Brother to sister. Slightly anxious from receiving no letter.

28. Friend to friend. No anxiety.

Anxiety is only reported, or to be surmised, in two or three cases. In a dozen the existence of illness was known. It may therefore be argued, adversely, that in the selected coincidental hallucinations, the persons seen were in the class most usually beheld in non-coincidental and, probably, purely subjective hallucinations representing real persons; also, that knowledge of their illness, even when no anxiety existed, kept them in some cases before the mind; also, that several cases are foreign, and that 'most foreigners are fools.' On the other hand, affection, familiarity, and knowledge of illness had *not* produced hallucinations even in the case of these percipients, till

within the twelve hours (often much less) of the event of death.

It would have been desirable, of course, to publish all the *non-coincidental* cases, and show how far, in these not *veridical* cases, the recognised phantasms were those of kindred, dear friends, known to be ill, and subjects of anxiety.<sup>1</sup>

The Census, in fact, does contain a chapter on 'Mental and Nervous Conditions in connection with Hallucinations,' such as anxiety, grief, and overwork. Do these produce, or probably produce, many empty hallucinations *not* coincident with death or any great crisis? If they do, then all cases in which a coincidental hallucination occurred to a person in anxiety, or overstrained, will seem to be, probably, fortuitous coincidences like the others. All percipients, of all sorts of hallucinations, hits or misses, were asked if they were in grief or anxiety. Now, out of 1,622 cases of hallucination of all known kinds (coincidental or not), mental strain was reported in 220 instances; of which 131 were cases of grief about known deaths or anxiety. These mental conditions, therefore, occur only in twelve per cent. of the instances. On the whole, it does not seem fair to argue that anxiety produces so much hallucination that it will account by itself for those which we have analysed as coincidental.

The impression left on my own mind by the Census does pretty closely agree with that of its authors. Fairly well persuaded of the possibility of telepathy, on other grounds, and even inclined to believe that it does produce coincidental hallucinations, the evidence of the Census, by itself, would not convince me nor its authors. We want better records; we want documentary evidence recording cases before the arrival of news of the coincidence. Memories are very adaptive. The authors,

<sup>1</sup> On this point see *Report*, p. 250. Fifty phantasms out of the whole occurred during anxiety or presumable anxiety. Of these, thirty-one coincided (within twelve hours) with the death of the person apparently seen. In the remaining nineteen, the person seen recovered in eight cases.

however, made a gallant effort, at the cost of much labour, and largely allowed for all conceivable drawbacks.

I am, personally, illogical enough to agree with Kant, and to be more convinced by the cumulative weight of the hundreds of cases in 'Phantasms of the Living,' in other sources, in my own circle of acquaintance, and even by the coincident traditions of European and savage peoples, than by the statistics of the Census. The whole mass, Census and all, is of very considerable weight, and there exist individual cases which one feels unable to dispute. Thus while I would never regard the hallucinatory figure of a friend, perceived by myself, as proof of his death, I would entertain some slight anxiety till I heard of his well-being.

On this topic I will offer, in a Kantian spirit, an anecdote of the kind which, occurring in great quantities, disposes the mind to a sort of belief. It is not given as evidence to go to a jury, for I only received it from the lips of a very gallant and distinguished officer and V.C., whose own part in the affair will be described.

This gentleman was in command of a small British force in one of the remotest and least accessible of our dependencies, not connected by telegraph, at the time of the incident, with the distant mainland. In the force was a particularly jolly young captain. One night he went to a dance, and, as the sleeping accommodation was exhausted, he passed the night, like a Homeric hero, on a couch beneath the echoing *loggia*. Next day, contrary to his wont, he was in the worst of spirits, and, after moping for some time, asked leave to go a three days' voyage to the nearest telegraph station. His commanding officer, my informant, was good-natured, and gave leave. At the end of a week Captain — returned, in his usual high spirits. He now admitted that, while lying awake in the verandah, after the ball, he had seen a favourite brother of his, then in, say, Peru. He could not shake off the impression; he had made the long voyage to the nearest telegraph station, and thence had telegraphed to another brother in, let us say, Hong Kong, 'Is all well

with John?' He received a reply, 'All well by last mail,' and so returned, relieved in mind, to his duties. But the next mail bringing letters from Peru brought news of his Peruvian brother's death on the night of the vision in the verandah.

This, of course, is not offered as evidence. For evidence we need Captain ——'s account, his Hong Kong brother's account, date of the dance, official date of the Peruvian brother's death, and so on. But the character of my informant indisposes me to disbelief. The names of places are intentionally changed, but the places were as remote from each other as those given in the text.

We find ourselves able to understand the Master of Ravenswood's cogitations after he saw the best wraith in fiction:

'She died expressing her eager desire to see me. Can it be, then—can strong and earnest wishes, formed during the last agony of nature, survive its catastrophe, surmount the awful bounds of the spiritual world, and place before us its inhabitants in the hues and colouring of life? And why was that manifested to the eye, which could not unfold its tale to the ear?' ('Her withered lips moved fast, although no sound issued from them.') 'And wherefore should a breach be made in the laws of nature, yet its purpose remain unknown?'

The Master's reasonings are such as, in hearing similar anecdotes, must have occurred to Scott. They no longer represent our views. The death and apparition were coincidental almost to the minute: it would be impossible to prove that life was utterly extinct, when Alice seemed to die, 'as the clock in the distant village tolled one, just before' Ravenswood's experience. We do not, like him, postulate 'a breach in the laws of nature,' only a possible example of a law. The tale was not 'unfolded to the ear,' as the telepathic impact only affected the sense of sight.

Here, perhaps, ought to follow a reply to certain

scientific criticisms of the theory that telepathy, or the action of one distant mind, or brain, upon another, may be the cause of 'coincidental hallucinations,' whether among savage or civilised races. But, not to delay the argument by controversy, the Reply to Objections has been relegated to the Appendix.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Appendix A.

## VII

## DEMONIACAL POSSESSION

THERE is a kind of hallucinations—namely, Phantasms of the Dead—about which it seems better to say nothing in this place. If such phantasms are seen by savages when awake, they will doubtless greatly corroborate that belief in the endurance of the soul after death, which is undeniably suggested to the early reasoner by the phenomena of dreaming. But, while it is easy enough to produce evidence to recognised phantasms of the dead in civilised life, it would be very difficult indeed to discover many good examples in what we know about savages. Some Fijian instances are given by Mr. Fison in his and Mr. Howitt's 'Kamilaroi and Kurnai.' Others occur in the narrative of John Tanner, a captive from childhood among the Red Indians. But the circumstance, already noted, that an Australian lad became a wizard on the strength of having seen a phantasm of his dead mother, proves that such experiences are not common; and Australian black fellows have admitted that they, for their part, never did see a ghost, but only heard of ghosts from their old men. Mr. David Leslie, previously cited, gives some first-hand Zulu evidence about a haunted wood, where the *Esemkofu*, or ghosts of persons killed by a tyrannical chief, were heard and felt by his native informant; the percipient was also pelted with stones, as by the European *Poltergeist*. The Zulu who dies commonly becomes an *Ihlozi*, and receives his share of



sacrifice. The *Esemkofu*, on the other hand, are disturbed and haunting spirits.<sup>1</sup>

As a rule, so far as our information goes, it is not recognised phantasms of the dead, in waking vision, which corroborate the savage belief in the persistence of the spirit of the departed. The savage reasoner rather rests his faith on the alleged phenomena of noises and physical movements of objects apparently untouched, which cause so many houses in civilised society to be shut up, or shunned, as 'haunted.' Such disturbances the savage naturally ascribes to 'spirits.' Our evidence, therefore, for recognised phantasms of the savage dead is very meagre, so it is unnecessary to examine the much more copious civilised evidence. The facts attested may, of course, be theoretically explained as the result of telepathy from a mind no longer incarnate; and, were the evidence as copious as that for coincidental hallucinations of the living, or dying, it would be of extreme importance. But it is not so copious, and, granting even that it is accurate, various explanations not involving anything so distasteful to science as the action of a disembodied intelligence may be, and have been, put forward.

We turn, therefore, from a theme in which civilised testimony is more bulky than that derived from savage life, to a topic in which savage evidence is much more full than modern civilised records. This topic is the so-called Demoniacal Possession.

In the philosophy of Animism, and in the belief of many peoples, savage and civilised, spirits of the dead, or spirits at large, can take up their homes in the bodies of living men. Such men, or women, are spoken of as 'inspired,' or 'possessed.' They speak in voices not their own, they act in a manner alien to their natural character, they are said to utter prophecies, and to display knowledge which they could not have normally acquired, and, in fact, do not consciously possess, in their normal condition. All these and similar phenomena the savage explains by the hypothesis that an alien spirit—perhaps

<sup>1</sup> *Among the Zulus*, p. 120.

a demon, perhaps a ghost, or a god—has taken possession of the patient. The possessed, being full of the spirit, delivers sermons, oracles, prophecies, and what the Americans call 'inspirational addresses,' before he returns to his normal consciousness. Though many such prophets are conscious impostors, others are sincere. Dr. Mason mentions a prophet who became converted to Christianity. 'He could not account for his former exercises, but said that it certainly appeared to him as though a spirit spoke, and he must tell what it communicated.' Dr. Mason also gives the following anecdote :

' . . . Another individual had a familiar spirit that he consulted and with which he conversed ; but, on hearing the Gospel, he professed to become converted, and had no more communication with his spirit. It had left him, he said ; it spoke to him no more. After a protracted trial I baptised him. I watched his case with interest, and for several years he led an unimpeachable Christian life ; but, on losing his religious zeal, and disagreeing with some of the church members, he removed to a distant village, where he could not attend the services of the Sabbath, and it was soon after reported that he had communications with his familiar spirit again. I sent a native preacher to visit him. The man said he heard the voice which had conversed with him formerly, but it spoke very differently. Its language was exceedingly pleasant to hear, and produced great brokenness of heart. It said, "Love each other ; act righteously—act uprightly," with other exhortations such as he had heard from the teachers. An assistant was placed in the village near him, when the spirit left him again ; and ever since he has maintained the character of a consistent Christian.'<sup>1</sup>

This anecdote illustrates what is called by spiritists 'change of control.' After receiving, and deserting, Christian doctrine, the patient again spoke unconsciously, but under the influence of the faith which he had abandoned. In the same way we shall find that a modern American

<sup>1</sup> *Burma*, p. 107.

'Medium,' after being for a time constantly in the society of educated and psychological observers, obtained new 'controls' of a character more urbane and civilised than her old 'familiar spirit.'<sup>1</sup>

It is admitted that the possessed sometimes display an eloquence which they are incapable of in their normal condition.<sup>2</sup> In China, possessed women, who never composed a line of poetry in their normal lives, utter their thoughts in verse, and are said to give evidence of clairvoyant powers.<sup>3</sup>

The book—*Demon Possession in China*—of Dr. Nevius, for forty years a missionary, was violently attacked by the medical journals of his native country, the United States. The doctor had the audacity to declare that he could find no better explanation of the phenomena than the theory of the Apostles—namely, that the patients were possessed. Not having the fear of man before his eyes, he also remarked that the current scientific explanations had the fault of not explaining anything.

For example, 'Mr. Tylor intimates that all cases of supposed demoniacal possession are identical with hysteria, delirium, and mania, and suchlike bodily and mental derangements.' Dr. Nevius, however, gave what he conceived to be the *notes* of possession, and, in his diagnosis, distinguished them from hysteria (whatever that may mean), delirium, and mania. Nor can it honestly be denied that, if the special notes of possession actually exist, they do mark quite a distinct species of mental affection. Dr. Nevius then observed that, according to Mr. Tylor, 'scientific physicians now explain the facts on a different principle,' but, says Dr. Nevius, 'we search in vain to discover what this principle is.'<sup>4</sup> Dr. Nevius, who had the courage of his opinions, then consulted a work styled 'Nervous Derangement,' by Dr. Hammond, a

<sup>1</sup> Hodgson, *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. xiii. pt. xxxiii. Dr. Hodgson by no means agrees with this view of the case—the case of Mrs. Piper.

<sup>2</sup> *Prim. Cult.* ii. 134.

<sup>3</sup> Nevius's *Demon Possession in China*, a curious collection of examples by an American missionary. The reports of Catholic missionaries abound in cases.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 169.

Professor in the Medical School of the University of New York.<sup>1</sup> He found this scientific physician admitting that we know very little about the matter. He knew, what is very gratifying, that 'mind is the result of nervous action,' and that so-called 'possession' is the result of 'material derangements of the organs or functions of the system.'

Dr. Nevius was ready to admit this latter doctrine in cases of idiocy, insanity, epilepsy, and hysteria; but then, said he, these are not what I call possession. The Chinese have names for all these maladies, 'which they ascribe to physical causes,' but for possession they have a different name. He expected Dr. Hammond to account for the abnormal conditions in so-called possession, but 'he has hardly even attempted to do this.' Dr. Nevius next perused the works of Dr. Griesinger, Dr. Baelz, Professor William James, M. Ribot, and, generally, the literature of 'alternating personality.' He found Mr. James professing his conviction that the 'alternating personality' (in popular phrase, the demon, or familiar spirit) of Mrs. Piper knew a great deal about things which Mrs. Piper, in her normal state, did not, and could not know. Thus, after consulting many physicians, Dr. Nevius was none the better, and came back to his faith in Diabolical Possession. He was therefore informed that he had written 'one of the most extraordinarily perverted books of the present day' on the evidence of 'transparent ghost stories'—which do not occur in his book.

The attitude of Dr. Nevius cannot be called strictly scientific. Because pathologists and psychologists are unable to explain, or give the *modus* of a set of phenomena, it does not follow that the devil, or a god, or a ghost, is in it.

But this, of course, was precisely the natural inference of savages.

Dr. Nevius catalogues the symptoms of possession thus :

1. The automatic, persistent and consistent acting out of a new personality, which calls himself *shieng* (genius) and calls the patient *hiang to* (incense burner, 'medium').

<sup>1</sup> Putnam, 1881.

2. Possession of knowledge and intellectual power not owned by the patient (in his normal state), nor explainable on the pathological hypothesis.

3. Complete change of moral character in the patient.

Of these notes, the second would, of course, most confirm the savage belief that a new intelligence had entered into the patient. If he displayed knowledge of the future, or of the remote, the inference that a novel and wiser intelligence had taken possession of the patient's body would be, to the savage, irresistible. But the more cautious modern, *even if he accepted the facts*, would be reduced to no such extreme conclusion. He would say that knowledge of the remote in space, or in the past, might be telepathically communicated to the brain of some living person; while, for knowledge of the future, he could fly, with Hartmann, to contact with the Absolute.

But the question of evidence for the facts is, of course, the only real question. Now, in Dr. Nevius's book, this evidence rests almost entirely on the written reports of native Christian teachers, for the Chinese were strictly reticent when questioned by Europeans. 'My heathen brother, you have a sister who is a demoniac?' asks the intelligent European. The reply of the heathen brother is best left in the obscurity of a remarkably difficult and copious Oriental language. We are thus obliged to fall back on the reports of Mr. Leng and other native Christian teachers. They are perfectly modest and rational in style. We learn that Mrs. Sen, a lady in her normal state incapable of lyrical efforts, lisped in numbers in her secondary personality, and detected the circumstance that Mr. Leng was on his way to see her, when she could not have learned the fact in any normal way.<sup>1</sup> 'They are now crossing the stream, and will be here when the sun is about so high;' which was correct. The other witnesses were examined, and corroborated.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Nevius himself examined Mrs. Kwo, when possessed, talking in verse, and, physically, limp.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nevius, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 38.

The narratives are of this type; the patient, on recovering consciousness, knows nothing of what has occurred; Christian prayers are often efficacious, and there are many anecdotes of movements of objects untouched.<sup>1</sup>

By a happy accident, as this chapter was passing through the press, a scientific account of a demoniac and his cure was published by Dr. Pierre Janet.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Janet has explained, with complete success, everything in the matter of possession, except the facts which, in the opinion of Dr. Nevius, were in need of explanation. These facts did not occur in the case of the demoniac 'exorcised' by Dr. Janet. Thus the learned essay of that eminent authority would not have satisfied Dr. Nevius. The facts in which he was interested did not present themselves in Dr. Janet's patient, and so Dr. Janet does not explain them.

The simplest plan, here, is to deny that the facts in which Dr. Nevius believes ever present themselves at all; but, if they ever do, Dr. Janet's explanation does not explain them.

1. His patient, Achille, did *not* act out a new personality.

2. Achille displayed *no* knowledge or intellectual power which he did not possess in his normal state.

3. His moral character was *not* completely changed; he was only more hypochondriacal and hysterical than usual.

Achille was a poor devil of a French tradesman who, like Captain Booth, had infringed the laws of strict chastity and virtue. He brooded on this till he became deranged, and thought that Satan had him. He was convulsed, anæsthetic, suicidal, involuntarily blasphemous. He was not 'exorcised' by a prayer or by a command, but after a long course of mental and physical treatment.

<sup>1</sup> See 'Fetishism and Spiritualism.'

<sup>2</sup> *Névroses et Idées Fixes*. Alcan, Paris, 1898. This is the first of a series of works connected with the Laboratoire de Psychologie, at the Salpêtrière, in Paris.

His cure does not explain the cures in which Dr. Nevius believed. His case did not present the features of which Dr. Nevius asked science for an explanation. Dr. Janet's essay is the *dernier cri* of science, and leaves Dr. Nevius just where it found him.

Science, therefore, can, and does, tell Dr. Nevius that his evidence for his facts is worthless, through the lips of Professor W. Romaine Newbold, in 'Proceedings, S.P.R.,' February 1898 (pp. 602-604). And the same number of the same periodical shows us Dr. Hodgson accepting facts similar to those of Dr. Nevius, and explaining them by—possession! (p. 406).

Dr. Nevius's observations practically cover the whole field of 'possession' in non-European peoples. But other examples from other areas are here included.

A rather impressive example of possession may be selected from Livingstone's 'Missionary Travels' (p. 86). The adventurous Sebituane was harried by the Matabele in a new land of his choice. He thought of descending the Zambesi till he was in touch with white men; but Tlapáne, 'who held intercourse with gods,' turned his face westwards. Tlapáne used to retire, 'perhaps into some cave, to remain in a hypnotic or mesmeric state' until the moon was full. Then he would return *en prophète*. 'Stamping, leaping, and shouting in a peculiarly violent manner, or beating the ground with a club' (to summon those under earth), 'they induce a kind of fit, and while in it pretend that their utterances are unknown to themselves,' as they probably are, when the condition is genuine. Tlapáne, after inducing the 'possessed' state, pointed east: 'There, Sebituane, I behold a fire; shun it, it may scorch thee. The gods say, Go not thither!' Then, pointing west, he said, 'I see a city and a nation of black men, men of the water, their cattle are red, thine own tribe are perishing, thou wilt govern black men, spare thy future tribe.'

So far, mere advice; then,

'Thou, Ramosinii, thy village will perish utterly. If Mokari moves first from the village, he will perish first; and thou, Ramosinii, wilt be the last to die.'

Then,

‘Like some bold seer in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance,’

‘The gods have given other men water to drink, but to me they have given bitter water. They call me away. I go.’<sup>1</sup>

Tlapáne died, Mokari died, Ramosinii died, their village was destroyed soon after, and so Sebituane wandered westward, not disobedient to the voice, was attacked by the Baloiana, conquered, and spared them.

Such is ‘possession’ among savages. It is superfluous to multiply instances of this world-wide belief, so freely illustrated in the New Testament, and in trials for witchcraft. The scientific study of the phenomena, as Littré complained, ‘had hardly been sketched’ forty years ago. In the intervening years, psychologists and hypnotists have devoted much attention to the theme of these ‘secondary personalities,’ which Animism explains by the theory of possession. The explanations of modern philosophers differ, and it is not our business to discuss their physiological and pathological ideas.<sup>2</sup> Our affair is to ask whether, in the field of experience, there is any evidence that persons thus ‘possessed’ really evince knowledge which they could not have acquired through normal channels? If such evidence exists, the facts would naturally strengthen the conviction that the possessed person was inspired by an intelligence not his own, that is, by a spirit. Now it is the firm conviction of several men of science that a certain Mrs. Piper, an American, does display, in her possessed condition, knowledge which she could not normally acquire. The case of this lady is precisely on a level with that of certain savage or barbaric seers. Thus: ‘The Fijian priest sits looking steadily at a whale’s tooth ornament, amid dead silence. In a few minutes

<sup>1</sup> ‘Macleod shall return, but Maerimmon shall never!’

<sup>2</sup> See Ribot, *Les Maladies de la Personnalité*; Bourru et Burot, *Variations de la Personnalité*; Janet, *L’Automatisme Psychologique*; James, *Principles of Psychology*; Myers, in *Proceedings of S.P.R.*, ‘The Mechanism of Genius,’ ‘The Subliminal Self.’



he trembles, slight twitchings of face and limbs come on, which increase to strong convulsions. . . . Now the god has entered.'<sup>1</sup>

In China, 'the professional woman sits at a table in contemplation, till the soul of a deceased person from whom communication is desired enters her body and talks through her to the living. . . .'<sup>2</sup>

The latter account exactly describes Mrs. Piper. When consulted she passes through convulsions into a trance, after which she talks in a new voice, assumes a fresh personality, and affects to be possessed by the spirit of a French doctor (who does not know French)—Dr. Phinuit. She then displays a varying amount of knowledge of dead and living people connected with her clients, who are usually strangers, often introduced under feigned names. Mrs. Piper and her husband have been watched by detectives, and have not been discovered in any attempts to procure information. She was for some months in England under the charge of the S.P.R. Other ghosts, besides Dr. Phinuit, ghosts more civilised than he, now influence her, and her latest performances are said to exceed her former efforts.<sup>3</sup>

Volumes of evidence about Mrs. Piper have been published by Dr. Hodgson, who unmasked Madame Blavatsky and Eusapia Paladino.<sup>4</sup> He was at first convinced that Mrs. Piper, in her condition of trance, obtains knowledge not otherwise and normally accessible to her. It was admitted that her familiar spirit guesses, attempts to extract information from the people who sit with her, and tries sophistically to conceal his failures. Here follow the statements of Professor James of Harvard.

'The most convincing things said about my own immediate household were either very intimate or very trivial. Unfortunately the former things cannot well be published. Of the trivial things I have forgotten the greater number, but the following, *rara nantes*, may

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* ii. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Doolittle's *Chinese*, i. 143; ii. 110, 320.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceedings*, S.P.R., pt. xxxiii.

<sup>4</sup> *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vi. 436-650; viii. 1-167; xiii. 284-582.

serve as samples of their class. She said that we had lost recently a rug, and I a waistcoat. (She wrongly accused a person of stealing the rug, which was afterwards found in the house.) She told of my killing a grey-and-white cat with ether, and described how it had "spun round and round" before dying. She told how my New York aunt had written a letter to my wife, warning her against all mediums, and then went off on a most amusing criticism, full of *traits vifs*, of the excellent woman's character. (Of course, no one but my wife and I knew the existence of the letter in question.) She was strong on the events in our nursery, and gave striking advice during our first visit to her about the way to deal with certain "tantrums" of our second child—"little Billy-boy," as she called him, reproducing his nursery name. She told how the crib creaked at night, how a certain rocking-chair creaked mysteriously, how my wife had heard footsteps on a stair, &c. &c. Insignificant as these things sound when read, the accumulation of them has an irresistible effect; and I repeat again what I said before, that, taking everything that I know of Mrs. Piper into account, the result is to make me feel as absolutely certain as I am of any personal fact in the world that she knows things in her trances which she cannot possibly have heard in her waking state, and that the definitive philosophy of her trances is yet to be found. The limitations of her trance information, its discontinuity and fitfulness, and its apparent inability to develop beyond a certain point, although they end by arousing one's moral and human impatience with the phenomenon, yet are, from a scientific point of view, amongst its most interesting peculiarities, since where there are limits there are conditions, and the discovery of them is always the beginning of an explanation.

'This is all I can tell you of Mrs. Piper. I wish it were more "scientific." But *valeat quantum!* it is the best I can do.'

Elsewhere Mr. James writes:

'Mr. Hodgson and others have made prolonged study

of this lady's trances, and are all convinced that supernatural powers of cognition are displayed therein. They are, *prima facie*, due to "spirit control." But the conditions are so complex that a dogmatic decision either for or against the hypothesis must as yet be postponed.<sup>1</sup>

Again—

'In the trances of this medium I cannot resist the conviction that knowledge appears which she has never gained by the ordinary waking use of her eyes, ears, and wits.

'The trances have broken down, for my own mind, the limits of the admitted order of nature.'

M. Paul Bourget (who is not superstitious), after consulting Mrs. Piper, concludes:

'L'esprit a des procédés de connaître non soupçonnés par notre analyse.'<sup>2</sup>

In this treatise I may have shown 'the will to believe' in an unusual degree; but, for me, the interest of Mrs. Piper is purely anthropological. She exhibits a survival or recrudescence of savage phenomena, real or feigned, of convulsion and of secondary personality, and entertains a survival of the animistic explanation.

Mrs. Piper's honesty and excellent character, in her normal condition, are vouched for by her friends and observers in England and America; nor do I impeach her normal character. But 'secondary personalities' have often more of Mr. Hyde than of Dr. Jekyll in their composition. It used to be admitted that, when 'possessed,' Mrs. Piper would cheat when she could—that is to say, she would make guesses, try to worm information out of her sitter, describe a friend of his, alive or dead, as 'Ed.,' who may be Edgar, Edmund, Edward, Edith, or anybody. She would shuffle, and repeat what she had picked up in a former sitting with the same person; and the vast majority of her answers started from vague references to probable facts

<sup>1</sup> *The Will to Believe*, p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> *Figaro*, January 14, 1895.

(as that an elderly man is an orphan), and so worked on to more precise statements. Professor Macalister wrote :

'She is quite wide-awake enough all through to profit by suggestions. I let her see a blotch of ink on my finger, and she said that I was a writer. . . . Except the guess about my sister Helen, who is alive, there was not a single guess which was nearly right. Mrs. Piper is not anæsthetic during the so-called trance, and if you ask my private opinion, it is that the whole thing is an imposture, and a poor one.'<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Barkworth said that, as far as his experience went, 'Mrs. Piper's powers are of the ordinary thought-reading [i.e. muscle-reading] kind, dependent on her hold of the visitor's hand.' Each of these gentlemen had only one 'sitting.' M. Paul Bourget also informed me, in conversation, that Mrs. Piper held his hand while she told the melancholy tale connected with a key in his possession, and that she did not tell the story promptly and fluently, but very slowly and hesitatingly. Even so, he declared that he did not feel able to account for her performance.

As these pages were passing through the press, Dr. Hodgson's last report on Mrs. Piper was published.<sup>2</sup> It is quite impossible, within the space allotted, to criticise this work. It would be necessary to examine minutely scores of statements, in which many facts are suppressed as too intimate, while others are remarkably incoherent. Dr. Hodgson deserves the praise of extraordinary patience and industry, displayed in the very distasteful task of watching an unfortunate lady in the vagaries of 'trance.' His reasonings are perfectly calm, perfectly unimpassioned, and his bias has not hitherto seemed to make for credulity. We must, in fact, regard him as an expert in this branch of psychology. But he himself makes it clear that, in his opinion, no written reports can convey the impressions produced by several years of personal

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, vi. 605, 606.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, S.P.R., part xxxiii. vol. xiii.

experience. The results of that experience he sums up in these words :

‘At the present time I cannot profess to have any doubt but that the chief “communicators” to whom I have referred in the foregoing pages are veritably the personalities that they claim to be, that they have survived the change we call death, and that they have directly communicated with us, whom we call living, through Mrs. Piper’s entranced organism.’<sup>1</sup>

This means that Dr. Hodgson, at present, in this case, accepts the hypothesis of ‘possession’ as understood by Maoris and Fijians, Chinese and Karens.

The published reports do not produce on me any such impression. As a personal matter of opinion, I am convinced that those whom I have honoured in this life would no more avail themselves of Mrs. Piper’s ‘entranced organism’ (if they had the chance) than I would voluntarily find myself in a ‘sitting’ with that lady. It is unnecessary to wax eloquent on this head; and the curious can consult the writings of Dr. Hodgson for themselves. Meanwhile we have only to notice that an American ‘possessed’ woman produces on a highly educated and sceptical modern intelligence the same impression as the Zulu ‘possessed’ produce on some Zulu intelligences.

The Zulus admit ‘possession’ and divination, but are not the most credulous of mankind. The ordinary possessed person is usually consulted as to the disease of an absent patient. The inquirers do not assist the diviner by holding his hand, but are expected to smite the ground violently if the guess made by the diviner is right; gently if it is wrong. A sceptical Zulu, named John, having a shilling to expend on psychical research, smote violently at *every* guess. The diviner was hopelessly puzzled; John kept his shilling, and laid it out on a much more meritorious exhibition of animated sticks.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* part xxxiii. p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> See ‘Fetishism.’ Compare Callaway, p. 328.

Uguise gave Dr. Callaway an account of a female possessed person with whom Mrs. Piper could not compete. Her spirit spoke, not from her mouth, but from high in the roof. It gave forth a kind of questioning remarks which were always correct. It then reported correctly a number of singular circumstances, ordered some remedies for a diseased child, and offered to return the fee, if ample satisfaction was not given.<sup>1</sup>

In China and Zululand, as in Mrs. Piper's case, the spirits are fond of diagnosing and prescribing for absent patients.

A good example of savage possession is given in his travels by Captain Jonathan Carver (1763).

Carver was waiting impatiently for the arrival of traders with provisions, near the Thousand Lakes. A priest, or jossakeed, offered to interview the Great Spirit, and obtain information. A large lodge was arranged, and the covering drawn up (which is unusual), so that what went on within might be observed. In the centre was a chest-shaped arrangement of stakes, so far apart from each other 'that whatever lay within them was readily to be discerned.' The tent was illuminated 'by a great number of torches.' The priest came in, and was first wrapped in an elk's skin, as Highland seers were wrapped in a black bull's hide. Forty yards of rope made of elk's hide were then coiled about him, till he 'was wound up like an Egyptian mummy.'

I have elsewhere shown<sup>2</sup> that this custom of binding with bonds the seer who is to be inspired, existed in Græco-Egyptian spiritualism, among Samoyeds, Eskimo, Canadian Hareskin Indians, and among Australian blacks.

'The head, body, and limbs are wound round with stringy bark cords.'<sup>3</sup> This is an extraordinary range of diffusion of a ceremony apparently meaningless. Is the idea that, by loosing the bonds, the seer demonstrates the

<sup>1</sup> Callaway, pp. 361-374.

<sup>2</sup> *Cock Lane and Common Sense*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Brough Smyth, i. 475. This point is disputed, but I did not invent it, and a case appears in Mr. Curr's work on the natives.

agency of spirits, after the manner of the Davenport Brothers? <sup>1</sup> But the Græco-Egyptian medium did *not* undo the swathings of linen, in which he was rolled, *like a mummy*. They had to be unswathed for him, by others. <sup>2</sup> Again, a dead body, among the Australians, is corded up tight, as soon as the breath is out of it, if it is to be buried, or before being exposed on a platform, if that is the custom. <sup>3</sup> Again, in the Highlands second-sight was thus acquired: the would-be seer 'must run a Tedder (tether) of Hair, *which bound a corpse to the Bier*, about his Middle from end to end,' and then look between his legs till he sees a funeral cross two marches. <sup>4</sup> The Greenland seer is bound 'with his head between his legs.' <sup>5</sup>

Can it be possible, judging from Australia, Scotland, Egypt, that the binding, as of a corpse or mummy, is a symbolical way of putting the seer on a level with the dead, who will then communicate with him? In three remote points, we find seer-binding and corpse-binding; but we need to prove that corpses are, or have been, bound at the other points where the seer is tied up—in a reindeer skin among the Samoyeds, an elk skin in North America, a bull's hide in the Highlands.

Binding the seer is not a universal Red Indian custom; it seems to cease in Labrador, and elsewhere, southwards, where the prophet enters a magic lodge, unbound. Among the Narquapees, he sits cross-legged, and the lodge begins to answer questions by leaping about. <sup>6</sup> The Eskimo bounds, though he is tied up.

It would be decisive, if we could find that, wherever the sorcerer is bound, the dead are bound also. I note the following examples, but the Creeks do not, I think, bind the magician.

Among the Creeks,

'The corpse is placed in a hole, with a blanket wrapped about it, and the legs bent under it *and tied together*.' <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* i. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* v. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Brough Smyth, i. 100, 113.

<sup>4</sup> Kirk, *Secret Commonwealth* 1691.

<sup>5</sup> Crantz, p. 209.

<sup>6</sup> Père Arnaud, in Hind's *Labrador*, ii. 102.

<sup>7</sup> Major Swan, 1791, official letter on the Creek Indians, Schoolcraft, v. 270.

The dead Greenlanders were 'wrapped and sewed up in their best deer-skins.'<sup>1</sup>

Carver could only learn that, among the Indians he knew, dead bodies were 'wrapped in skins;' that they were also swathed with cords he does not allege, but he was not permitted to see all the ceremonies.

My theory is, at least, plausible, for this manner of burying the dead, tied tightly up, with the head between the legs (as in the practice of Scottish and Greenland seers), is very old and widely diffused. Ellis says, of the Tahitians, 'the body of the dead man was . . . placed in a sitting posture, with the knees elevated, *the face pressed down between the knees*, . . . and the whole body tied with cord or cinet, wound repeatedly round.'<sup>2</sup>

The binding may originally have been meant to keep the corpse, or ghost, from 'walking.' I do not know that Tahitian prophets were ever tied up, to await inspiration. But I submit that the frequency of the savage form of burial with the corpse tied up, or swathed, sometimes with the head between the legs; and the recurrence of the savage practice of similarly binding the sorcerer, probably points to a purpose of introducing the seer to the society of the dead. The custom, as applied to prophets, might survive, even where the burial rite had altered, or cannot be ascertained, and might survive, for corpses, where it had gone out of use, for seers. The Scotch used to justify their practice of putting the head between the knees when, bound with a corpse's hair tether, they learned to be second-sighted, by what Elijah did. The prophet, on the peak of Carmel, 'cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.'<sup>3</sup> But the cases are not analogous. Elijah had been hearing a premonitory 'sound of abundance of rain' in a cloudless sky. He was probably engaged in prayer, not in prophecy.

Kirk, by the way, notes that if the wind changes, while the Scottish seer is bound, he is in peril of his life.

<sup>1</sup> Crantz, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> *Polynesian Researches*, i. 519.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings xviii. 42.



So children are told, in Scotland, that, if the wind changes while they are making faces, the grimace will be permanent. The seer will, in the same way, become what he pretends to be, a corpse.

This desertion of Carver's tale may be pardoned for the curiosity of the topic. He goes on:

'Being thus bound up like an Egyptian mummy' (Carver unconsciously making my point), 'the seer was lifted into the chest-like enclosure. I could now also discern him as plain as I had ever done, and I took care not to turn my eyes away a moment'—in which effort he probably failed.

The priest now began to mutter, and finally spoke in a mixed jargon of scarcely intelligible dialects. He now yelled, prayed, and foamed at the mouth, till in about three quarters of an hour he was exhausted and speechless. 'But in an instant he sprang upon his feet, notwithstanding at the time he was put in it appeared impossible for him to move either his legs or arms, and shaking off his covering, as quick as if the bands with which it had been bound were burst asunder,' he prophesied. The Great Spirit did not say when the traders would arrive, but, just after high noon, next day, a canoe would arrive, and the people in it would tell when the traders were to appear.

Next day, just after high noon, a canoe came round a point of land about a league away, and the men in it, who had met the traders, said they would come in two days, which they did. Carver, professing freedom from any tincture of credulity, leaves us 'to draw what conclusions we please.'

The natural inference is 'private information,' about which the only difficulty is that Carver, who knew the topography and the chances of a secret messenger arriving to prompt the Jossakeed, does not allude to this theory.<sup>1</sup> He seems to think such successes not uncommon.

All that psychology can teach anthropology, on this

<sup>1</sup> Carver, pp. 123, 134.

whole topic of 'possession,' is that secondary or alternating personalities are facts *in rerum natura*, that the man or woman in one personality may have no conscious memory of what was done or said in the other, and that cases of knowledge said to be supernormally gained in the secondary state are worth inquiring about, if there be a chance of getting good evidence.

A few fairly respectable savage instances are given in Dr. Gibier's 'Le Fakirisme Occidental' and in Mr. Manning's 'Old New Zealand;' but, while modern civilised parallels depend on the solitary case of Mrs. Piper (for no other case has been well observed), no affirmative conclusion can be drawn from Chinese, Maori, Zulu, or Red Indian practice.

## VIII

## FETISHISM AND SPIRITUALISM

It has been shown how the doctrine of souls was developed according to the anthropological theory. The hypothesis as to how souls of the dead were later elevated to the rank of gods, or supplied models after which such gods might be inventively fashioned, will be criticised in a later chapter. Here it must suffice to say that the conception of a separable surviving soul of a dead man was not only not essential to the savage's idea of his supreme god, as it seems to me, but would have been wholly inconsistent with that conception. There exist, however, numerous forms of savage religion in addition to the creed in a Supreme Being, and these contribute their streams to the ocean of faith. Thus among the kinds of belief which served in the development of Polytheism, was Fetishism, itself an adaptation and extension of the idea of separable souls. In this regard, like ancestor-worship, it differs from the belief in a Supreme Being, which, as we shall try to demonstrate, is not derived from the theory of ghosts or souls at all.

*Fetish* (*fétiche*) seems to come from Portuguese *feitiço*, a talisman or amulet, applied by the Portuguese to various material objects regarded by the negroes of the west coast with more or less of religious reverence. These objects may be held sacred in some degree for a number of incongruous reasons. They may be tokens, or may be of value in sympathetic magic, or merely *odd*, and therefore

probably endowed with unknown mystic qualities. Or they may have been pointed out in a dream, or met in a lucky hour and associated with good fortune, or they may (like a tree with an unexplained stir in its branches, as reported by Kohl) have seemed to show signs of life by spontaneous movements; in fact, a thing may be what Europeans call a fetish for scores of reasons. For our present purpose, as Mr. Tylor says, 'to class an object as a fetish demands explicit statement that a spirit is considered as embodied in it, or acting through it, or communicating by it, or, at least, that the people it belongs to do habitually think this of such objects; or it must be shown that the object is treated as having personal consciousness or power, is talked with, worshipped . . . ' and so forth. The in-dwelling spirit may be human, as when a fetish is made out of a friend's skull, the spirit in which may even be asked for oracles, like the Head of Brân in Welsh legend.

We have tried to show that the belief in human souls may be, in part at least, based on supernormal phenomena which Materialism disregards. We shall now endeavour to make it probable that Fetishism (the belief in the souls tenanted in inanimate objects) may also have sources which perhaps are not normal, or which at all events seemed supernormal to savages. We say 'perhaps not normal' because the phenomena now to be discussed are of the most puzzling character. We may lean to the belief in a supernormal cause of certain hallucinations, but the alleged movements of inanimate objects which probably supply one origin of Fetishism, one suggestion of the presence of a spirit in things dead, leave the inquiring mind in perplexity. In following Mr. Tylor's discussion of the subject, it is necessary to combine what he says about Spiritualism in his fourth with what he says about Fetishism in his fourteenth and later chapters. For some reason his book is so arranged that he criticises 'Spiritualism' long before he puts forward his doctrine of the origin and development of the belief in spirits.

We have seen a savage reason for supposing that

human spirits inhabit certain lifeless things, such as skulls and other relics of the dead. But how did it come to be thought that a spirit dwelt in a lifeless and motionless piece of stone or stick? Mr. Tylor, perhaps, leads us to a plausible conjecture by writing: 'Mr. Darwin saw two Malay women in Keeling Island, who held a wooden spoon dressed in clothes like a doll: this spoon had been carried to the grave of a dead man, and becoming inspired at full moon, in fact lunatic, it danced about convulsively, like a table or a hat at a modern spirit séance.'<sup>1</sup> Now M. Lefébure has pointed out (in 'Mélusine') that, according to De Broses, the African conjurers gave an appearance of independent motion to small objects, which were then accepted as fetishes, being visibly animated. M. Lefébure next compares, like Mr. Tylor, the alleged physical phenomena of spiritualism, the flights and movements of inanimate objects apparently untouched.

The question thus arises, Is there any truth whatever in these world-wide and world-old stories of inanimate objects acting like animated things? Has fetishism one of its origins in the actual field of supernormal experience in the X region? This question we do not propose to answer, as the evidence, though practically universal, may be said to rest on imposture and illusion. But we can, at least, give a sketch of the nature of the evidence, beginning with that as to the apparently *voluntary* movements of objects, *not* untouched. Mr. Tylor quotes from John Bell's 'Journey in Asia' (1719) an account of a Mongol Lama who wished to discover certain stolen pieces of damask. His method was to sit on a bench, when 'he carried it, or, as was commonly believed, it carried him, to the very tent' of the thief. Here the bench is innocently believed to be self-moving. Again, Mr. Rowley tells how in Manganjah the sorcerer, to find out a criminal, placed, with magical ceremonies, two staffs of wood in the hands of some young men. 'The sticks whirled and dragged the men round like mad,' and finally escaped and rolled to the feet of the

<sup>1</sup> Darwin, *Journal*, p. 458; Tylor, *Prim. Cult.* ii. 152. The spoon was not untouched.

wife of a chief, who was then denounced as the guilty person.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Duff Macdonald describes the same practice among the Yaos:<sup>2</sup>

'The sorcerer occasionally makes men take hold of a stick, which, after a time, begins to move as if endowed with life, and ultimately carries them off bodily and with great speed to the house of the thief.'

The process is just that of Jacques Aymard in the celebrated story of the detection of the Lyons murderer.<sup>3</sup>

In Melanesia, far enough away, Dr. Codrington found a similar practice, and here the sticks are explicitly said by the natives to be moved by *spirits*.<sup>4</sup> The wizard and a friend hold a bamboo stick by each end, and ask what man's ghost is afflicting a patient. At the mention of the right ghost 'the stick becomes violently agitated.' In the same way, the bamboo 'would run about' with a man holding it only on the palms of his hands. Again, a hut is built with a partition down the middle. Men sit there with their hands *under* one end of the bamboo, while the other end is extended into the empty half of the hut. They then call over the names of the recently dead, till 'they feel the bamboo moving in their hands.' A bamboo placed on a sacred tree, 'when the name of a ghost is called, moves of itself, and will lift and drag people about.' Put up into a tree, it would lift them from the ground. In other cases the holding of the sticks produces convulsions and trance.<sup>5</sup> The divining sticks of the Maori are also 'guided by spirits,'<sup>6</sup> and those of the Zulu sorcerers rise, fall, and jump about.<sup>7</sup>

These Zulu performances must be really very curious. In the last chapter we told how a Zulu named John, having a shilling to lay out in the interests of psychical research, declined to pay a perplexed diviner, and reserved

<sup>1</sup> Rowley, *Universities' Mission*, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> *Africana*, vol. i. p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> In the author's *Custom and Myth*, 'The Divining Rod.'

<sup>4</sup> Codrington's *Melanesia*, p. 210.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 223-225.

<sup>6</sup> *Prim. Cult.* vol. i. p. 125.

<sup>7</sup> Callaway, *Amazulu*, p. 330.

his capital for a more meritorious performance. He tried a medium named Unomantshintshi, who divined by Umabakula, or dancing sticks—

‘If they say “no,” they fall suddenly; if they say “yes,” they arise and jump about very much, and leap on the person who has come to inquire. They “fix themselves on the place where the sick man is affected; . . . if the head, they leap on his head. . . . Many believe in Umabakula more than in the diviner. But there are not many who have the Umabakula.”’

Dr. Callaway’s informant only knew two Umabakulists. John was quite satisfied, paid his shilling, and went home.<sup>1</sup>

The sticks are about a foot long. It is not reported that they are moved by spirits, nor do they seem to be regarded as fetishes.

Mr. Tylor also cites a form of the familiar pendulum experiment. Among the Karens a ring is suspended by a thread over a metal basin. The relations of the dead strike the basin, and when he who was dearest to the ghost touches it the spirit twists the thread till it breaks, and the ring falls into the basin. With us a ring is held by a thread over a tumbler, and our unconscious movements swing it till it strikes the hour. How the Karens manage it is less obvious. These savage devices with animated sticks clearly correspond to the more modern ‘table-turning.’ Here, when the players are honest, the pushing is certainly *unconscious*.

I have tested this in two ways—first by trying the minimum of *conscious* muscular action that would stir a table at which I was alone, and by comparing the absolute unconsciousness of muscular action when the table began to move in response to no *voluntary* push. Again, I tried with a friend, who said, ‘You are pushing,’ when I gently removed my hands altogether, though they seemed to rest on the table, which still revolved. My friend was himself unconsciously pushing. It is undeniable that, to

<sup>1</sup> Callaway, *Amazulu*, p. 353.

a solitary experimenter, the table *seems* to make little darts of its own will in a curious way. Thus, the unconsciousness of muscular action on the part of savages engaged in the experiment with sticks would lead them to believe that spirits were animating the wood. The same fallacy beset the table-turners of 1855-65, and was, to some extent, exposed by Faraday. Of course, savages would be even more convinced by the dancing spoon of Mr. Darwin's tale, by the dancing sticks of the Zulus, and the rest, whether the phenomena were supernatural or merely worked by unseen strings. The same remark applies to modern experimenters, when, as they declare, various objects move untouched, without physical contact.

Still more analogous than turning tables to the savage use of inspired sticks for directing the inquirer to a lost object or to a criminal, is the modern employment of the divining-rod—a forked twig which, held by the ends, revolves in the hands of the performer when he reaches the object of his quest. He, like the savage cited, is occasionally agitated in a convulsive manner; and cases are quoted in which the twig writhes when held in a pair of tongs! The best-known modern treatise on the divining-rod is that of M. Chevreul, '*La Baguette Divinatoire*' (1854). We have also '*L'Histoire du Merveilleux dans les Temps Modernes*,' by M. Figuier (1860). In 1781 Thouvenel published his 600 experiments with Bleton and others; and Hegel refers to Amoretti's collection of hundreds of cases. The case of Jacques Aymard, who in the seventeenth century discovered a murderer by the use of the rod in true savage fashion, is well known. In modern England the rod is used in the interests of private individuals and public bodies (such as Trinity College, Cambridge) for the discovery of water.

Professor Barrett has lately published a book of 280 pages, in which evidence of failures and successes is collected.<sup>1</sup> Professor Barrett gives about one hundred and fifty cases, in which he was only able to discover, on good

<sup>1</sup> *The So-called Divining-Rod*, S.P.R. 1897.



authority, twelve failures. He gives a variety of tests calculated to check frauds and chance coincidence, and he publishes opinions, hostile or agnostic, by geologists. The evidence, as a general rule, is what is called first-hand in other inquiries. The actual spectators, and often the owners of the land, or the persons in whose interest water was wanted, having been present, give their testimony; and it is certain that the 'diviner' is called in by people of sense and education, commonly too practical to have a theory, and content with getting what they want, especially where scientific experts have failed.<sup>1</sup>

In Mr. Barrett's opinion, the subconscious perception of indications of the presence of water produces an equally unconscious muscular 'spasm,' which twirls the rod till it often breaks. Yet 'it is almost impossible to imitate its characteristic movement by any voluntary effort.' I have myself held the hands of an amateur performer when the twig was moving, and neither by sight nor touch could I detect any muscular movement on his part, much less a spasm. The person was bailiff on a large estate, and, having accidentally discovered that he possessed the gift, used it when he wanted wells dug for the tenants on the property.

The whole topic is obscure; nor am I concerned here with the successes or failures of the divining-rod. But the movements of the twig have never, to my knowledge, been attributed by modern English performers to the operation of spirits. They say 'electricity.' Mr. Tylor merely writes:

'The action of the famous divining-rod, with its curiously versatile sensibility to water, ore, treasure, and thieves, seems to belong partly to trickery and partly to more or less conscious direction by honest operators.'

As the divining-rod is the only instance in which automatism, whatever its nature and causes, has been found of practical value by practical men, and as it is obviously associated with a number of analogous pheno-

<sup>1</sup> See especially *The Waterford Experiments*, p. 106.

mena, both in civilised and savage life, it certainly deserves the attention of science. But no advance will be made till scientifically trained inquirers themselves arrange and test a large number of experiments. Knowledge of the geological ignorance of the dowzers, examples of fraud on their part, and cases of failure or reported failure, with a general hostile bias, may prevent such experiments from being made by scientific experts on an adequate scale. Such experts ought, of course, to avoid working the dowzers into a state of irritation.

It is just worth while to notice cases in which the rod acts like those of the Melanesians, Africans, and other savages. A Mr. Thomas Welton published an English translation of 'La Verge de Jacob' (Lyon, 1693). In 1651 he asked his servant to bring into the garden 'a stick that stood behind the parlour door. In great terror she brought it to the garden, her hand firmly clutched on it, nor could she let it go.' When Mrs. Welton took the stick, 'it drew her with very considerable velocity to nearly the centre of the garden,' where a well was found. Mr. Welton is not likely to have known of the lately published savage examples. The coincidence with the African and Melanesian cases is, therefore, probably undesigned.

Again, in 1694, the rod was used by le Père Menestrier and others, just as it is by savages, to indicate by its movements answers to all sorts of questions. Experiments of this kind have not been made by Professor Barrett, and other modern inquirers, except by M. Richet, as a mode of detecting automatic action. But it would be just as sensible to use the twig as to use planchette or any other 'autoscopie' apparatus. If these elicit knowledge unconsciously present to the mind, mere water-finding ought not to be the sole province of the rod. In the same class as these rods is the forked twig which, in China, is held at each end by two persons, and made to write in the sand. The little apparatus called *planchette*, or the other, the *ouija*, is of course, consciously or unconsciously, pushed by the performers. In the case of the twig, as held by water-

seekers, the difficulty of consciously moving it so as to escape close observation is considerable.

In the case of the *ouija* (a little tripod, which, under the operators' hands, runs about a table inscribed with letters at which it points), I have known curious successes to be achieved by amateurs. Thus, in the house of a lady who owned an old *château* in another county, the *ouija*, operated on by two ladies known to myself, wrote a number of details about a visit paid to the *château* for a certain purpose by Mary Stuart. That visit, and its object, a purely personal one, are unknown to history, and the *château* is not spoken of in Mr. Hay Fleming's careful, but unavoidably incomplete, itinerary of the Queen's residence in Scotland. After the communication had been made, the owner of the *château* explained that she was already acquainted with the circumstances described, as she had recently read them in documents in her charter chest, where they remain.

Of course, the belief we extend to such narratives is entirely conditioned by our knowledge of the personal character of the performers. The point here is merely the civilised and savage practice of *automatism*, the apparent eliciting of knowledge not otherwise accessible, by the movements of a stick, or a bit of wood. These movements, made without conscious exertion or direction, seem, to savage philosophy, to be caused by in-dwelling spirits, the sources of Fetishism.

These examples, then, demonstrating unconscious movement of objects by the operators, make it clear that movements even of touched objects, may be attributed, by some civilised and by savage amateurs, to 'spirits.' The objects so moved may, by savages, be regarded in some cases as fetishes, and their movements may have helped to originate the belief that spirits can inhabit inanimate objects. When objects apparently quite untouched become volatile, the mystery is deeper. This apparent animation and frolicsome behaviour of inanimate objects is reported all through history, and attested by immense quantities of evidence of every degree. It would be tedious to give a

full account of the antiquity and diffusion of reports about such occurrences. We find them among Neo-Platonists, in the English and Continental Middle Ages, among Eskimo, Hurons, Algonkins, Tartars, Zulus, Malays, Nasquapees, Maoris, in witch trials, in ancient Peru (immediately after the Spanish Conquest), in China, in modern Russia, in New England (1680), all through the career of modern spiritualism, in Hayti (where they are attributed to 'Obeah'), and, sporadically, everywhere.<sup>1</sup>

Among all these cases, we must dismiss whatever the modern paid medium does in the dark. The only thing to be done with the ethnographic and modern accounts of such marvels is to 'file them for reference.' If a spontaneous example occurs, under proper inspection, we can then compare our old tales. Professor James says: 'Their mutual resemblances suggest a natural type, and I confess that till these records, or others like them, are positively explained away, I cannot feel (in spite of such vast amounts of detected frauds) as if the case of physical mediumship itself, as a freak of nature, were definitely closed. . . . So long as the stories multiply in various lands, and so few are positively explained away, it is bad method to ignore them.'<sup>2</sup> Here they are not ignored, because, whatever the cause or causes of the phenomena, they would buttress, if they did not originate, the savage belief in spirits tenanted inanimate matter, whence came Fetishism. As to facts, we cannot, of course, 'explain away' events of this kind, which we know only through report. A conjurer cannot explain a trick merely from a description, especially a description by a non-conjurer. But, as a rule, nothing so much leads to doubt on this theme as the 'explanation' given—except, of course, in the case of 'dark séances' got up and prepared by paid mediums. We know, sometimes, how the 'explanation' arose.

Thus, the house of a certain M. Zoller, a lawyer

<sup>1</sup> Authorities and examples are collected in the author's *Cock Lane and Common Sense*.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, xii. 7, 8.

and member of the Swiss Federal Council, a house at Stans, in Unterwalden, was made simply uninhabitable in 1860-1862. The disturbances, including movements of objects, were of a truly odious description, and occurred in full daylight. M. Zoller, deeply attached to his home, which had many interesting associations with the part his family played in the struggle against revolutionary France, was obliged to abandon the place. He had made every conceivable sort of research, and had called in the local police and *savants*, to no purpose.

But the affair was explained away thus: While the phenomena could still be concealed from public curiosity, a client called to see M. Zoller, who was out. The client, therefore, remained in the drawing-room. Loud and heavy blows resounded through the room. The client, as it chanced, had once felt the effects of an electric battery, for some medical reason, apparently. M. Zoller writes: 'My eldest son was present at the time, and, when my client asked whether there was such a thing as an electrical machine in the house (the family having been enjoined to keep the disturbances as secret as possible), he allowed S. to think that there was.' Consequently, the phenomena were set down to M. Zoller's singular idea of making his house untenable with an 'electric machine'—which he did not possess.<sup>1</sup> A number of the most respected citizens, including the Superintendent of Police, and the chief magistrate for law, published a statement that neither Zoller, nor any of his family, nor any of themselves, produced or could have produced the phenomena witnessed by them in August 1862. This declaration they put forth in the 'Schwyitzer Zeitung,' October 5, 1863.<sup>2</sup> No electric machine known to mortals could have produced the vast variety of alleged effects, none was ever found; and as M. Zoller changed his servants without escaping his tribulations, they can hardly be blamed for what, *prima facie*, it seems that

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Narrative*, by M. Zoller. Hanke, Zurich, 1863.

<sup>2</sup> Daumer, *Reich des Wundersamen*, Regensburg, 1872, pp. 265, 266.

they could not possibly do. However, 'electricity,' like Mesopotamia, is 'a blessed word.'<sup>1</sup>

My own position in this matter of 'physical phenomena' is, I hope, clear. They interest me, for my present purpose, as being, whatever their real nature and origin, things which would suggest to a savage his theory of Fetishism. 'An inanimate object may be tenanted by a spirit, as is proved by its extraordinary movements.' Thus the early thinker might reason, and go on to revere the object. It is to be wished that competent observers would pay more attention to such savage practices as crystal-gazing and automatism as illustrated by the sticks of the Melaneseans, Zulus, and Yaos. Our scanty information we pick up out of stray allusions, but it has the advantage of being uncontaminated by theory, the European spectator not knowing the wide range of such practices and their value in experimental psychology.

We have now finished our study of the less normal and usual phenomena, which gave rise to belief in separable, self-existing, conscious, and powerful souls. We have shown that the supernormal factors which, when reflected on, probably supported this belief, are represented in civilised as well as in savage life, while as to their existence among the founders of religion we can historically know nothing at all. If we may infer from certain considerations, the supernormal experiences were possibly more prevalent among the remote ancestors of known savage races than among their modern descendants. We have suggested that clairvoyance, thought transference, and telepathy cannot be dismissed as mere fables, by a cautious inquirer, while even the far more obscure stories of 'physical manifestations' are but poorly explained away by those who cannot explain them.<sup>2</sup> Again, these faculties have presented—in the acquisition of otherwise unattainable knowledge, in coincidental hallucinations, and in other ways—just the kind of facts on which the

<sup>1</sup> A criticism of modern explanations of the phenomena here touched upon will be found in Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B.

savage doctrine of souls might be based, or by which it might be buttressed. Thus, while the actuality of the supernatural facts and faculties remains at least an open question, the prevalent theory of Materialism cannot be admitted as dogmatically certain in its present shape. No more than any other theory, nay, less than some other theories, can it account for the psychical facts which, at the lowest, we may not honestly leave out of the reckoning.

We have therefore no more to say about the supernatural aspects of the origins of religion. We are henceforth concerned with matters of verifiable belief and practice. We have to ask whether, when once the doctrine of souls was conceived by early men, it took precisely the course of development usually indicated by anthropological science.

## IX

*EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF GOD*

To the anthropological philosopher 'a plain man' would naturally put the question: 'Having got your idea of spirit or soul—your theory of Animism—out of the idea of ghosts, and having got your idea of ghosts out of dreams and visions, how do you get at the Idea of God?' Now by 'God' the proverbial 'plain man' of controversy means a primal eternal Being, author of all things, the father and friend of man, the invisible, omniscient guardian of morality.

The usual though not invariable reply of the anthropologist might be given in the words of Mr. Im Thurn, author of a most interesting work on the Indians of British Guiana:

'From the notion of ghosts,' says Mr. Im Thurn, 'a belief has arisen, but very gradually, in higher spirits, and eventually in a Highest Spirit, and, keeping pace with the growth of these beliefs, a habit of reverence for, and worship of spirits. . . . The Indians of Guiana know no God.'<sup>1</sup>

As another example of Mr. Im Thurn's hypothesis that God is a late development from the idea of spirit may be cited Mr. Payne's learned 'History of the New World,' a work of much research:<sup>2</sup>

'The lowest savages not only have no gods, but do not

<sup>1</sup> *Journal Anthropol. Inst.* xi. 374. We shall return to this passage.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i. p. 389, 1892.



even recognise those lower beings usually called spirits, the conception of which has invariably preceded that of gods in the human mind.'

Mr. Payne here differs, *toto cælo*, from Mr. Tylor, who finds no sufficient proof for wholly non-religious savages, and from Roskoff, who has disposed of the arguments of Sir John Lubbock. Mr. Payne, then, for ethnological purposes, defines a god as 'a benevolent spirit, permanently embodied in some tangible object, usually an image, and to whom food, drink,' and so on, 'are regularly offered for the purpose of securing assistance in the affairs of life.'

On this theory 'the lowest savages' are devoid of the idea of god or of spirit. Later they develop the idea of spirit, and when they have secured the spirit, as it were, in a tangible object, and kept it on board wages, then the spirit has attained to the dignity and the savage to the conception of a god. But while a god of this kind is, in Mr. Payne's opinion, relatively a late flower of culture, for the hunting races generally (with some exceptions) have no gods, yet 'the conception of a creator or maker of all things . . . obviously a great spirit' is 'one of the earliest efforts of primitive logic.'<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Payne's own logic is not very clear. The 'primitive logic' of the savage leads him to seek for a cause or maker of things, which he finds in a great creative spirit. Yet the lowest savages have no idea even of spirit, and the hunting races, as a rule, have no god. Does Mr. Payne mean that a great creative spirit is *not* a god, while a spirit kept on board wages in a tangible object *is* a god? We are unable, by reason of evidence later to be given, to agree with Mr. Payne's view of the facts, while his reasoning appears somewhat inconsistent, the lowest savages having, in his opinion, no idea of spirit, though the idea of a creative spirit is, for all that, one of the earliest efforts of primitive logic.

On any such theories as these the belief in a moral

<sup>1</sup> Payne, i. 458.

Supreme Being is a very late (or a very early?) result of evolution, due to the action of advancing thought upon the original conception of ghosts. This opinion of Mr. Im Thurn's is, roughly stated, the usual theory of anthropologists. We wish, on the other hand, to show that the idea of God, as he is conceived of by our inquiring plain man, is shadowed forth (among contradictory fables) in the lowest-known grades of savagery, and therefore cannot arise from the later speculation of men, comparatively civilised and advanced, on the original datum of ghosts. We shall demonstrate, contrary to the opinion of Mr. Spencer, Mr. Huxley, and even Mr. Tylor, that the Supreme Being, and, in one case at least, the casual sprites of savage faith, are active moral influences. What is even more important, we shall make it undeniable that Anthropology has simplified her problem by neglecting or ignoring her facts. While the real problem is to account for the evolution out of ghosts of the eternal, creative moral god of the 'plain man,' the germ of such a god or being in the creeds of the lowest savages is by anthropologists denied, or left out of sight, or accounted for by theories contradicted by facts, or, at best, is explained away as a result of European or Islamite influences. Now, as the problem is to account for the evolution of the highest conception of God, as far as that conception exists among the most backward races, the problem can never be solved while that highest conception of God is practically ignored.

Thus, anthropologists, as a rule, in place of facing and solving their problem, have merely evaded it—doubtless unwittingly. This, of course, is not the practice of Mr. Tylor, though even his great work is professedly much more concerned with the development of the idea of spirit and with the lower forms of animism than with the real *crux*—the evolution of the idea (always obscured by mythology) of a moral, uncreated, undying God among the lowest savages. This negligence of anthropologists has arisen from a single circumstance. They take it for granted that God is always (except where the word for

God is applied to a living human being) regarded as a Spirit. Thus, having accounted for the development of the idea of spirit, they regard God as that idea carried to its highest power, and as the final step in its evolution. But, if we can show that the early idea of an undying, moral, creative being does not necessarily or logically imply the doctrine of spirit (or ghost), then this idea of an eternal, moral, creative being may have existed even before the doctrine of spirit was evolved.

We may admit that Mr. Tylor's account of the process by which Gods were evolved out of ghosts is a little *touffu*—rather buried in facts. We 'can scarcely see the wood for the trees.' We want to know how Gods, makers of things (or of most things), fathers in heaven, and friends, guardians of morality, seeing what is good or bad in the hearts of men, were evolved, as is supposed, out of ghosts or surviving souls of the dead. That such moral, practically omniscient Gods are known to the very lowest savages—Bushmen, Fuegians, Australians—we shall demonstrate.

Here the inquirer must be careful not to adopt the common opinion that Gods improve, morally and otherwise, in direct ratio to the rising grades in the evolution of culture and civilisation. That is not necessarily the case; usually the reverse occurs. Still less must we take it for granted, following Mr. Tylor and Mr. Huxley, that the 'alliance [of religion and morality] belongs almost, or wholly, to religions above the savage level—not to the earlier and lower creeds;' or that 'among the Australian savages,' and 'in its simplest condition,' 'theology is wholly independent of ethics.'<sup>1</sup> These statements can be proved (by such evidence as anthropology is obliged to rely upon) to be erroneous. And, just because these statements are put forward, Anthropology has an easier task in explaining the origin of religion; while, just because these statements are incorrect, her conclusion, being deduced from premises so far false, is invalidated.

Given souls, acquired by thinking on the lines already

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* vol. ii. p. 381; *Science and Hebrew Tradition*, pp. 346, 372.

described, Mr. Tylor develops Gods out of them. But he is not one of the writers who is certain about every detail. He 'scarcely attempts to clear away the haze that covers great parts of the subject.'<sup>1</sup>

The human soul, he says, has been the model on which man 'framed his ideas of spiritual beings in general, from the tiniest elf that sports in the grass up to the heavenly creator and ruler of the world, the Great Spirit.' Here it is taken for granted that the Heavenly Ruler was from the first envisaged as a 'spiritual being'—which is just the difficulty. Was He?<sup>2</sup>

The process of framing these ideas is rather obscure. The savage 'lives in terror of the souls of the dead as harmful spirits.' This might yield a Devil; it would not yield a God who 'makes for righteousness.' Happily, 'deified ancestors are regarded, on the whole, as kindly spirits.' The dead ancestor is 'now passed into a deity.'<sup>3</sup> Examples of ancestor-worship follow. But we are no nearer home. For among the Zulus many Amatongo (ancestral spirits) are sacred. 'Yet their father [*i.e.* the father of each actual family] is far before all others when they worship the Amatongo. . . . They do not know the ancients who are dead, nor their laud-giving names, nor their names.'<sup>4</sup> Thus, each new generation of Zulus must have a new first worshipful object—its own father's Itongo. This father, and his very name, are, in a generation or two, forgotten. The name of such a man, therefore, cannot survive as that of the God or Supreme Being from age to age; and, obviously, such a real dead man, while known at all, is much too well known to be taken for the creator and ruler of the world, despite some African flattering titles and superstitions about kings who control the weather. The Zulus, about as 'godless' a people as possible, have a mythical first ancestor, Unkulunkulu, but he is 'beyond the reach of rites,' and is a centre of myths rather than of worship or of moral ideas.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* vol. ii. p. 109.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 110.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> *Prim. Cult.* vol. ii. pp. 115, 116, citing Callaway and others.

<sup>5</sup> The Zulu religion will be analysed later.

After other examples of ancestor-worship, Mr. Tylor branches off into a long discussion of the theory of 'possession' or inspiration,<sup>1</sup> which does not assist the argument at the present point. Thence he passes to fetishism (already discussed by us), and the transitions from the fetish—(1) to the idol; (2) to the guardian angel ('subliminal self'); (3) to tree and river spirits, and local spirits which cause volcanoes; and (4) to polytheism. A fetish may inhabit a tree; trees being generalised, the fetish of one oak becomes the god of the forest. Or, again, fetishes rise into 'species gods;' the gods of *all* bees, owls, or rabbits are thus evolved.

Next,<sup>2</sup>

'As chiefs and kings are among men, so are the great gods among the lesser spirits. . . . With little exception, wherever a savage or barbaric system of religion is thoroughly described, great gods make their appearance in the spiritual world as distinctly as chiefs in the human tribe.'

Very good; but whence comes the great God among tribes which have neither chief nor king and probably never had, as among the Fuegians, Bushmen, and Australians? The maker and ruler of the world known to *these* races cannot be the shadow of king or chief, reflected and magnified on the mist of thought; for chief or king these peoples have none. This theory (Hume's) will not work where people have a great God but no king or chief; nor where they have a king but no Zeus or other supreme King-god, as (I conceive) among the Aztecs.

We now reach, in Mr. Tylor's theory, great fetish deities, such as Heaven and Earth, Sun and Moon, and 'departmental deities,' gods of Agriculture, War, and so forth, unknown to low savages.

Next Mr. Tylor introduces an important personage. 'The theory of family Manes, carried back to tribal Gods, leads to the recognition of superior deities of the nature of Divine Ancestor, or First Man,' who sometimes ranks as Lord of the Dead. As an instance, Mr. Tylor gives the

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* vol. ii. pp. 130-144.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 248.

Maori Maui, who, like the Indian Yama, trod first of men the path of death. But whether Maui and Yama are the Sun, or not, both Maori and Sanskrit religion regard these heroes as much later than the Original Gods. In Kam-schatka the First Man is the 'son' of the Creator, and it is about the origin of the idea of the Creator, not of the First Man, that we are inquiring. Adam is called 'the son of God' in a Biblical genealogy, but, of course, Adam was made, not begotten. The case of the Zulu belief will be analysed later. On the whole, we cannot explain away the conception of the Creator as a form of the conception of an idealised divine First Ancestor, because the conception of a Creator occurs where ancestor-worship does not occur; and again, because, supposing that the idea of a Creator came first, and that ancestor-worship later grew more popular, the popular idea of Ancestor might be transferred to the waning idea of Creator. The Creator might be recognised as the First Ancestor, *après coup*.

Mr. Tylor next approaches Dualism, the idea of hostile Good and Bad Beings. We must, as he says, be careful to discount European teaching, still, he admits, the savage has this dualistic belief in a 'primitive' form. But the savage conception is not merely that of 'good=friendly to me,' 'bad=hostile to me.' Ethics, as we shall show, already come into play in his theology.

Mr. Tylor arrives, at last, at the Supreme Being of savage creeds. His words, well weighed, must be cited textually:—

'To mark off the doctrines of monotheism, closer definition is required [than the bare idea of a Supreme Creator], assigning the distinctive attributes of Deity to none save the Almighty Creator. It may be declared that, in this strict sense, no savage tribe of monotheists has been ever known.<sup>1</sup> Nor are any fair representatives of the lower culture in a strict sense pantheists. The doctrine which they do widely hold, and which opens to them a course tending in one or other of these directions,

<sup>1</sup> And very few civilised populations, if any, are monotheistic in this sense.

is polytheism culminating in the rule of one supreme divinity. High above the doctrine of souls, of divine Manes, of local nature gods, of the great gods of class and element, there are to be discerned in barbaric theology, shadowings, quaint or majestic, of the conception of a Supreme Deity, henceforth to be traced onward in expanding power and brightening glory along the history of Religion. It is no unimportant task, partial as it is, to select and group the typical data which show the nature and position of the doctrine of supremacy, as it comes into view within the lower culture.<sup>1</sup>

We shall show that certain low savages are as monotheistic as some Christians. They have a Supreme Being, and the 'distinctive attributes of Deity' are not by them assigned to other beings, further than as Christianity assigns them to Angels, Saints, the Devil, and, strange as it appears, among savages, to mediating 'Sons.'

It is not known that, among the Andamanese and other tribes, this last notion is due to missionary influence. But, in regard to the whole chapter of savage Supreme Beings, we must, as Mr. Tylor advises, keep watching for Christian and Islamite contamination. The savage notions, as Mr. Tylor says, even when thus contaminated, may have 'to some extent, a native substratum.' We shall select such savage examples of the idea of a Supreme Being as are attested by ancient native hymns, or are inculcated in the most sacred and secret savage institutions, the religious Mysteries (manifestly the last things to be touched by missionary influence), or are found among low insular races defended from European contact by the jealous ferocity and poisonous jungles of people and soil. We also note cases in which missionaries found such native names as 'Father,' 'Ancient of Heaven,' 'Maker of All,' ready-made to their hands.

It is to be remarked that, while this branch of the inquiry is practically omitted by Mr. Spencer, Mr. Tylor

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* vol. ii. pp. 332, 333.

can spare for it but some twenty pages out of his large work. He arranges the probable germs of the savage idea of a Supreme Being thus: A god of the polytheistic crowd is simply raised to the primacy, which, of course, cannot occur where there is no polytheism. Or the principle of Manes worship may make a Supreme Deity out of 'a primeval ancestor,' say Unkulunkulu, who is so far from being supreme, that he is abject. Or, again, a great phenomenon or force in Nature-worship, say Sun, or Heaven, is raised to supremacy. Or speculative philosophy ascends from the Many to the One by trying to discern through and beyond the universe a First Cause. Animistic conceptions thus reach their utmost limit in the notion of the Anima Mundi. He may accumulate all powers of all polytheistic gods, or he may 'loom vast, shadowy, and calm . . . too benevolent to need human worship . . . too merely existent to concern himself with the petty race of men.'<sup>1</sup> But he is always animistic.

Now, in addition to the objections already noted in passing, how can we tell that the Supreme Being of low savages was, in original conception, *animistic* at all? How can we know that he was envisaged, originally, as *Spirit*? We shall show that he probably was not, that the question 'spirit or not spirit' was not raised at all, that the Maker and Father in Heaven, prior to Death, was merely regarded as a deathless *Being*, no question of 'spirit' being raised. If so, Animism was not needed for the earliest idea of a moral Eternal. This hypothesis will be found to lead to some very singular conclusions. It will be more fully stated and illustrated, presently, but I find that it had already occurred to Dr. Brinton.<sup>2</sup> He is talking specially of a heaven-god; he says 'it came to pass that the idea of God was linked to the heavens *long ere man asked himself, Are the heavens material and God spiritual?*' Dr. Brinton, however, does not develop his idea, nor am I aware that it has been developed previously.

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* vol. ii. pp. 335, 336.

<sup>2</sup> *Myths of the New World*, 1868, p. 47.



The notion of a God about whose spirituality nobody has inquired is new to us. To ourselves, and doubtless or probably to barbarians on a certain level of culture, such a Divine Being *must* be animistic, *must* be a 'spirit.' To take only one case, to which we shall return, the Banks Islanders (Melanesia) believe in ghosts, 'and in the existence of Beings who were not, and never had been, human. All alike might be called spirits,' says Dr. Codrington, but, *ex hypothesi*, the Beings 'who never were human' are only called 'spirits,' by us, because our habits of thought do not enable us to envisage them *except* as 'spirits.' They never were men, 'the natives will always maintain that he (the *Vui*) was *something different*, and deny to him the fleshly body of a man,' while resolute that he was *not* a ghost.<sup>1</sup>

This point will be amply illustrated later, as we study that strangely neglected chapter, that essential chapter, the Higher beliefs of the Lowest savages. Of the existence of a belief in a Supreme Being, not as merely 'alleged,' there is as good evidence as we possess for any fact in the ethnographic region.

It is certain that savages, when first approached by curious travellers, and missionaries, have again and again recognised our God in theirs.

The mythical details and fables about the savage God are, indeed, different; the ethical, benevolent, admonishing, rewarding, and creative aspects of the Gods are apt to be the same.<sup>2</sup>

'There is no necessity for beginning to tell even the most degraded of these people of the existence of God, or of a future state, the facts being universally admitted.'<sup>3</sup>

'Intelligent men among the Bakwains have scouted the idea of any of them ever having been without a tolerably clear conception of good and evil, God and the

<sup>1</sup> I observed this point in *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, while I did not see the implication, that the idea of 'spirit' was not necessarily present in the savage conception of the primal Beings, Creators, or Makers.

<sup>2</sup> See one or two cases in *Prim. Cult.* vol. ii. p. 340.

<sup>3</sup> Livingstone, speaking of the Bakwain, *Missionary Travels*, p. 153.

future state. Nothing we indicate as sin ever appeared to them as otherwise,' except polygamy, says Livingstone.

Now we may agree with Mr. Tylor that modern theologians, familiar with savage creeds, will scarcely argue that 'they are direct or nearly direct products of revelation' (vol. ii. p. 356). But we may argue that, considering their nascent ethics (denied or minimised by many anthropologists) and the distance which separates the high gods of savagery from the ghosts out of which they are said to have sprung; considering too, that the relatively pure and lofty element which, *ex hypothesi*, is most recent in evolution, is also, *not* the most honoured, but often just the reverse; remembering, above all, that we know nothing historically of the mental condition of the founders of religion, we may hesitate to accept the anthropological hypothesis *en masse*. At best it is conjectural, and the facts are such that opponents have more justification than is commonly admitted for regarding the bulk of savage religion as degenerate, or corrupted, from its own highest elements. I am by no means, as yet, arguing positively in favour of that hypothesis, but I see what its advocates mean, or ought to mean, and the strength of their position. Mr. Tylor, with his unique fairness, says 'the degeneration theory, no doubt in some instances with justice, may claim such beliefs as mutilated and perverted remains of higher religion' (vol. ii. p. 336).

I do not pretend to know how the lowest savages evolved the theory of a God who reads the heart and 'makes for righteousness.' It is as easy, almost, for me to believe that they 'were not left without a witness,' as to believe that this God of theirs was evolved out of the maleficent ghost of a dirty mischievous medicine-man.

Here one may repeat that while the 'quaint or majestic foreshadowings' of a Supreme Being, among very low savages, are only sketched lightly by Mr. Tylor; in Mr. Herbert Spencer's system they seem to be almost omitted. In his 'Principles of Sociology' and 'Ecclesiastical Institutions' one looks in vain for an adequate

notice; in vain for almost any notice, of this part of his topic. The watcher of conduct, the friendly, creative being of low savage faith, whence was he evolved? The circumstance of his existence, as far as I can see; the chastity, the unselfishness, the pitifulness, the loyalty to plighted word, the prohibition of even extra-tribal homicide, enjoined in various places on his worshippers, are problems that appear somehow to have escaped Mr. Spencer's notice. We are puzzled by endless difficulties in his system: for example as to how savages can forget their great-grandfathers' very names, and yet remember 'traditional persons from generation to generation,' so that 'in time any amount of expansion and idealisation can be reached.'<sup>1</sup>

Again, Mr. Spencer will argue that it is a strange thing if 'primitive men had, as some think, the consciousness of a Universal Power whence they and all other things proceeded,' and yet 'spontaneously performed to that Power an act like that performed by them to the dead body of a fellow savage'—by offerings of food.<sup>2</sup>

Now, first, there would be nothing strange in the matter if the crude idea of 'Universal Power' came *earliest*, and was superseded, in part, by a later propitiation of the dead and ghosts. The new religious idea would soon refract back on, and influence by its ritual, the older conception. And, secondly, it is precisely this 'Universal Power' that is *not* propitiated by offerings of food, in Tonga, (despite Mr. Huxley) Australia, and Africa, for example. We cannot escape the difficulty by saying that there the old ghost of Universal Power is regarded as dead, decrepit, or as a *roi fainéant* not worth propitiating, for that is not true of the punisher of sin, the teacher of generosity, and the solitary sanction of faith between men and peoples.

It would appear then, on the whole, that the question of the plain man to the anthropologist, 'Having got your idea of spirit into the savage's mind, how does he develop

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i. p. 450.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* vol. i. p. 302.

out of it what I call God? ' has not been answered. God cannot be a reflection from human kings where there have been no kings; nor a president elected out of a polytheistic society of gods where there is as yet no polytheism; nor an ideal first ancestor where men do not worship their ancestors; while, again, the spirit of a man who died, real or ideal, does not answer to a common savage conception of the Creator. All this will become much more obvious as we study in detail the highest gods of the lowest races.

Our study, of course, does not pretend to embrace the religion of all the savages in the world. We are content with typical, and, as a rule, well-observed examples. We range from the creeds of the most backward and worst-equipped nomad races, to those of peoples with an aristocracy, hereditary kings, houses and agriculture, ending with the Supreme Being of the highly civilised Incas, and with the Jehovah of the Hebrews.

## X

*HIGH GODS OF LOW RACES*

To avoid misconception we must repeat the necessary cautions about accepting evidence as to high gods of low races. The missionary who does not see in every alien god a devil is apt to welcome traces of an original supernatural revelation, darkened by all peoples but the Jews. We shall not, however, rely much on missionary evidence, and, when we do, we must now be equally on our guard against the anthropological bias in the missionary himself. Having read Mr. Spencer and Mr. Tylor, and finding himself among ancestor-worshippers (as he sometimes does), he is apt to think that ancestor-worship explains any traces of a belief in the Supreme Being. Against each and every bias of observers we must be watchful.

It may be needful, too, to point out once again another weak point in all reasoning about savage religion, namely that we cannot always tell what may have been borrowed from Europeans. Thus, the Fuegians, in 1830-1840, were far out of the way, but one tribe, near Magellan's Straits, worshipped an image called *Cristo*. Fitzroy attributes this obvious trace of Catholicism to a Captain Pelippa, who visited the district some time before his own expedition. It is less probable that Spaniards established a belief in a moral Deity in regions where they left no material traces of their faith. The Fuegians are not easily proselytised. 'When discovered by strangers, the instant impulse of a Fuegian family is to run off into the woods.' Occasionally they will emerge to barter, but

'sometimes nothing will induce a single individual of the family to appear.' Fitzroy thought they had no idea of a future state, because, among other reasons not given, 'the evil spirit torments them in *this* world, if they do wrong, by storms, hail, snow, &c.' Why the evil spirit should punish evil deeds is not evident. 'A great black man is supposed to be always wandering about the woods and mountains, who is certain of knowing every word and every action, who cannot be escaped and who influences the weather according to men's conduct.'<sup>1</sup>

There are no traces of propitiation by food, or sacrifice, or anything but conduct. To regard the Deity as 'a magnified non-natural man' is not peculiar to Fuegian theologians, and does not imply Animism, but the reverse. But the point is that this ethical judge of perhaps the lowest savages 'makes for righteousness' and searches the heart. His morality is so much above the ordinary savage standard that he regards the slaying of a stranger and an enemy, caught redhanded in robbery, as a sin. York's brother (York was a Fuegian brought to England by Fitzroy) killed a 'wild man' who was stealing his birds. 'Rain come down, snow come down, hail come down, wind blow, blow, very much blow. Very bad to kill man. Big man in woods no like it, he very angry.' Here be ethics in savage religion. The Sixth Commandment is in force. The Being also prohibits the slaying of flappers before they can fly. 'Very bad to shoot little duck, come wind, come rain, blow, very much blow.'<sup>2</sup>

Now this big man is not a deified chief, for the Fuegians 'have no superiority of one over another . . . but the doctor-wizard of each party has much influence.' Mr. Spencer disposes of this moral 'big man' of the Fuegians as 'evidently a deceased weather-doctor.'<sup>3</sup> But, first, there is no evidence that the being is regarded as ever having died. Again, it is not shown that Fuegians are ancestor-worshippers. Next, Fitzroy did not think

<sup>1</sup> Fitzroy, ii. 180. Darwin, *Descent of Man*, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* We seem to have little information about Fuegian religion either before or after the cruise of the *Beagle*. <sup>3</sup> *Principles of Sociology*, i. 422.

that the Fuegians believed in a future life. Lastly, when were medicine-men such notable moralists? The worst spirits among the neighbouring Patagonians are those of dead medicine-men. As a rule everywhere the ghost of a 'doctor-wizard,' shaman, or whatever he may be called, is the worst and wickedest of all ghosts. How, then, the Fuegians, who are not proved to be ancestor-worshippers, evolved out of the malignant ghost of an ancestor a being whose strong point is morality, one does not easily conceive. The adjacent Chonos 'have great faith in a good spirit, whom they call Yerri Yuppon, and consider to be the author of all good; him they invoke in distress or danger.' However starved they do not touch food till a short prayer has been muttered over each portion, 'the praying man looking upward.'<sup>1</sup> They have magicians, but no details are given as to spirits or ghosts. If Fuegian and Chono religion is on this level, and if this be the earliest, then the theology of many other higher savages (as of the Zulus) is decidedly degenerate. 'The Bantu gives one accustomed to the negro the impression that he once had the same set of ideas, *but has forgotten half of them*,' says Miss Kingsley.<sup>2</sup>

Of all races now extant, the Australians are probably lowest in culture, and, like the fauna of the continent, are nearest to the primitive model. They have neither metals, bows, pottery, agriculture, nor fixed habitations; and no traces of higher culture have anywhere been found above or in the soil of the continent. This is important, for in some respects their religious conceptions are so lofty that it would be natural to explain them as the result either of European influence, or as relics of a higher civilisation in the past. The former notion is discredited by the fact that their best religious ideas are imparted in connection with their ancient and secret mysteries, while for the second idea, that they are degenerate from a loftier civilisation, there is absolutely no evidence.

It has been suggested, indeed, by Mr. Spencer that the singularly complex marriage customs of the Australian

<sup>1</sup> Fitzroy, ii. 190, 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Travels in West Africa*, p. 442.

blacks point to a more polite condition in their past history. Of this stage, as we said, no material traces have ever been discovered, nor can degeneration be recent. Our earliest account of the Australians is that of Dampier, who visited New Holland in the unhappy year 1688. He found the natives 'the miserablest people in the world. The Hodmadods, of Monomatapa, though a nasty people, yet for wealth are gentlemen to these: who have no houses, sheep, poultry, and fruits of the earth. . . . They have no houses, but lie in the open air.' Curiously enough, Dampier attests their *unselfishness*: the main ethical feature in their religious teaching. 'Be it little or be it much they get, every one has his part, as well the young and tender as the old and feeble, who are not able to go abroad, as the strong and lusty.' Dampier saw no metals used, nor any bows, merely boomerangs ('wooden cutlasses'), and lances with points hardened in the fire. 'Their place of dwelling was only a fire with a few boughs before it' (the *gunyeh*).

This description remains accurate for most of the unsophisticated Australian tribes, but Dampier appears only to have seen ichthyophagous coast blacks.

There is one more important point. In the *Bora*, or Australian mysteries, at which knowledge of 'The Maker' and of his commandments is imparted, the front teeth of the initiated are still knocked out. Now, Dampier observed 'the two fore-teeth of their upper jaw are wanting in all of them, men and women, old and young.' If this is to be taken quite literally, the *Bora* rite, in 1688, must have included the women, at least locally. Dampier was on the north-west coast in latitude 16 degrees, longitude 122½ degrees east (Dampier Land, West Australia). The natives had neither boats, canoes, nor bark logs; but it seems that they had their religious mysteries and their unselfishness, two hundred years ago.<sup>1</sup>

The Australians have been very carefully studied by many observers, and the results entirely overthrow Mr. Huxley's bold statement that 'in its simplest condition,

<sup>1</sup> *Early Voyages to Australia*, 102-111 (Hakluyt Society).



such as may be met with among the Australian savages, theology is a mere belief in the existence, powers, and dispositions (usually malignant) of ghost-like entities who may be propitiated or scared away; but no cult can properly be said to exist. And in this stage theology is wholly independent of ethics.'

Remarks more crudely in defiance of known facts could not be made. The Australians, assuredly, believe in 'spirits,' often malicious, and probably in most cases regarded as ghosts of men. These aid the wizard, and occasionally inspire him. That these ghosts are *worshipped* does not appear, and is denied by Waitz. Again, in the matter of cult, 'there is none' in the way of *sacrifice* to higher gods, as there should be if these gods were hungry ghosts. The cult among the Australians is the keeping of certain 'laws,' expressed in moral teaching, supposed to be in conformity with the institutes of their God. Worship takes the form, as at Eleusis, of tribal mysteries, originally instituted, as at Eleusis, by the God. The young men are initiated with many ceremonies, some of which are cruel and farcical, but the initiation includes ethical instruction, in conformity with the supposed commands of a God who watches over conduct. As among ourselves, the ethical ideal, with its theological sanction, is probably rather above the moral standard of ordinary practice. What conclusion we should draw from these facts is uncertain, but the facts, at least, cannot be disputed, and precisely contradict the statement of Mr. Huxley. He was wholly in the wrong when he said: 'The moral code, such as is implied by public opinion, derives no sanction from theological dogmas.'<sup>1</sup> It reposes, for its origin and sanction, on such dogmas.

The evidence as to Australian religion is abundant, and is being added to yearly. I shall here content myself with Mr. Howitt's accounts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Science and Hebrew Tradition*, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the Anthropol. Institute*, 1884. See, for less dignified accounts, *op. cit.* xxiv. xxv.

As regards the possible evolution of the Australian God from ancestor-worship, it must be noted that Mr. Howitt credits the groups with possessing 'headmen,' a kind of chiefs, whereas some inquirers, in Brough Smyth's collection, disbelieve in regular chiefs. Mr. Howitt writes :—

'The Supreme Spirit, who is believed in by all the tribes I refer to here [in South-Eastern Australia], either as a benevolent, or more frequently as a malevolent being, it seems to me represents the defunct headman.'

Now, the traces of 'headmanship' among the tribes are extremely faint; no such headman rules large areas of country, none is known to be worshipped after death, and the malevolence of the Supreme Spirit is not illustrated by the details of Mr. Howitt's own statement, but the reverse. Indeed, he goes on at once to remark that '*Darumulun* was not, it seems to me, everywhere thought a malevolent being, but he was dreaded as one who could severely punish the trespasses committed against these tribal ordinances and customs whose first institution is ascribed to him.'

To punish transgressions of his law is not the essence of a malevolent being. *Darumulun* 'watched the youths from the sky, prompt to punish, by disease or death, the breach of his ordinances,' moral or ritual. His name is too sacred to be spoken except in whispers, and the anthropologist will observe that the names of the human dead are also often tabooed. But the divine name is not thus tabooed and sacred when the mere folklore about him is narrated. The informants of Mr. Howitt instinctively distinguished between the mythology and the religion of *Darumulun*.<sup>1</sup> This distinction—the secrecy about the religion, the candour about the mythology—is essential, and accounts for our ignorance about the inner religious beliefs of early races. Mr. Howitt himself knew little till he was initiated. The grandfather

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, xiii. 193.

of Mr. Howitt's friend, *before the white men came to Melbourne*, took him out at night, and, pointing to a star, said: 'You will soon be a man; you see *Bunjil* [Supreme Being of certain tribes] up there, and he can see you, and all you do down here.' Mr. Palmer, speaking of the Mysteries of Northern Australians (mysteries under divine sanction), mentions the nature of the moral instruction. Each lad is given, 'by one of the elders, advice so kindly, fatherly, and impressive, as often to soften the heart, and draw tears from the youth.' He is to avoid adultery, not to take advantage of a woman if he finds her alone, he is not to be quarrelsome.<sup>1</sup>

At the Mysteries Darumulun's real name may be uttered, at other times he is 'Master' (*Biamban*) or 'Father' (*Papang*), exactly as we say 'Lord' and 'Father.'

It is known that all these things are not due to missionaries, whose instructions would certainly not be conveyed in the *Bora*, or tribal mysteries, which, again, are partly described by Collins as early as 1798, and must have been practised in 1688. Mr. Howitt mentions, among moral lessons divinely sanctioned, respect for old age, abstinence from lawless love, and avoidance of the sins so popular, poetic, and sanctioned by the example of Gods, in classical Greece.<sup>2</sup> A representation is made of the Master, *Biamban*; and to make such idols, except at the Mysteries, is forbidden 'under pain of death.' Those which are made are destroyed as soon as the rites are ended.<sup>3</sup> The future life (apparently) is then illustrated by the burial of a living elder, who rises from a grave. This may, however, symbolise the 'new life' of the *Mystæ*, 'Worse have I fled; better have I found,' as was sung in an Athenian rite. The whole result is, by what Mr. Howitt calls 'a quasi-religious element,' to 'impress upon the mind of the youth, in an indelible manner, those rules of conduct which form the moral law of the tribe.'<sup>4</sup>

Many other authorities could be adduced for the religious sanction of morals in Australia. A watchful

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, xiii. 296.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 450.

<sup>3</sup> P. 453.

<sup>4</sup> P. 457.

being observes and rewards the conduct of men; he is named with reverence, if named at all; his abode is the heavens; he is the Master and Lord of things; his lessons 'soften the heart.'<sup>1</sup>

'What wants this knave  
That a *God* should have?'

I shall now demonstrate that the religion patronised by the Australian Supreme Being, and inculcated in his Mysteries, is actually used to counteract the immoral character which natives acquire by associating with Anglo-Saxon Christians.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Howitt<sup>3</sup> gives an account of the Jeraeil, or Mysteries of the Kurnai. The old men deemed that through intercourse with whites 'the lads had become selfish and no longer inclined to share that which they obtained by their own exertions, or had given them, with their friends.' One need not say that selflessness is the very essence of goodness, and the central moral doctrine of Christianity. So it is in the religious Mysteries of the African Yao; a selfish man, we shall see, is spoken of as 'uninitiated.' So it is with the Australian Kurnai, whose mysteries and ethical teaching are under the sanction of their Supreme Being. So much for the anthropological dogma that early theology has no ethics.

<sup>1</sup> See Brough Smyth, *Aborigines*, i. 428; Taplin, *Native Races of Australia*. According to Taplin, Nurrundere was a deified black fellow, who died on earth. This is not the case of Baiame, but is said, rather vaguely, to be true of Daramulun. *J.A.I.* xiii. 194, xxv. 297.

<sup>2</sup> From a brief account of the Fire Ceremony, or *Engwurrra* of certain tribes in Central Australia, it seems that religious ceremonies connected with Totems are the most notable performances. Also 'certain mythical ancestors,' of the '*alcheringa*, or dream-times,' were celebrated; these real or ideal human beings appear to 'sink their identity in that of the object with which they are associated, and from which they are supposed to have originated.' There appear also to be places haunted by 'spirit individuals,' in some way mixed up with Totems, but nothing is said of sacrifice to these Manes. The brief account is by Professor Baldwin Spencer and Mr. F. J. Gillen, *Proc. Royal Soc. Victoria*, July 1897. This Fire Ceremony is not for lads—not a kind of confirmation in the savage church—but is intended for adults.

<sup>3</sup> *J. Anthropol. Inst.* 1885, p. 310.

The Kurnai began by kneading the stomachs of the lads about to be initiated (that is, if they have been associating with Christians), to expel selfishness and greed. The chief rite, later, is to blindfold every lad, with a blanket closely drawn over his head, to make whirring sounds with the *tundun*, or Greek *rhombos*, then to pluck off the blankets, and bid the initiate raise their faces to the sky. The initiator points to it, calling out, 'Look there, look there, look there!' They have seen in this solemn way the home of the Supreme Being, 'Our Father,' Mungan-ngaur (Mungan = 'Father,' ngaur = 'our'), whose doctrine is then unfolded by the old initiator ('headman') 'in an impressive manner.'<sup>1</sup> 'Long ago there was a great Being, Mungan-ngaur, who lived on the earth.' His son Tundun is *direct ancestor* of the Kurnai. Mungan initiated the rites, and destroyed earth by water when they were impiously revealed. 'Mungan left the earth, and ascended to the sky, where he still remains.'

Here Mungan-ngaur, a Being not defined as spirit, but immortal, and dwelling in heaven, is Father, or rather grandfather, not maker, of the Kurnai. This *may* be interpreted as ancestor-worship, but the opposite myth, of making or creating, is of frequent occurrence in many widely-severed Australian districts, and co-exists with evolutionary myths. Mungan-ngaur's precepts are:

1. *To listen to and obey the old men.*
2. *To share everything they have with their friends.*
3. *To live peaceably with their friends.*
4. *Not to interfere with girls or married women.*
5. *To obey the food restrictions until they are released from them by the old men.*

Mr. Howitt concludes: 'I venture to assert that it can no longer be maintained that the Australians have no belief which can be called religious, that is, in the sense of beliefs which govern tribal and individual morality under a supernatural sanction.' On this topic Mr.

<sup>1</sup> *J. Anthropol. Inst.* 1885, p. 313.

Howitt's opinion became more affirmative the more deeply he was initiated.<sup>1</sup>

The Australians are the lowest, most primitive savages, yet no propitiation by food is made to their moral Ruler, in heaven, as if he were a ghost.

The laws of these Australian divine beings apply to ritual as well as to ethics, as might naturally be expected. But the moral element is conspicuous, the reverence is conspicuous: we have here no mere ghost, propitiated by food or sacrifice, or by purely magical rites. His very image (modelled on a large scale in earth) is no vulgar idol: to make such a thing, except on the rare sacred occasions, is a capital offence. Meanwhile the mythology of the God has often, in or out of the rites, nothing rational about it.

On the whole it is evident that Mr. Herbert Spencer, for example, underrates the nature of Australian religion. He cites a case of addressing the ghost of a man recently dead, which is asked not to bring sickness, 'or make loud noises in the night,' and says: 'Here we may recognise the essential elements of a cult.' But Mr. Spencer does not allude to the much more essentially religious elements which he might have found in the very authority whom he cites, Mr. Brough Smyth.<sup>2</sup> This appears, as far as my scrutiny goes, to be Mr. Spencer's solitary reference to Australia in the work on 'Ecclesiastical Institutions.' Yet the facts which he and Mr. Huxley ignore throw a light very different from theirs on what they consider 'the simplest condition of theology.'

Among the causes of confusion in thought upon religion, Mr. Tylor mentions 'the partial and one-sided application of the historical method of inquiry into theological doctrines.'<sup>3</sup> Here, perhaps, we have examples.

In its highest aspect that 'simplest theology' of Australia is free from the faults of popular theology in Greece. The God discourages sin, though, in myth, he is far from impeccable. He is almost too revered to be

<sup>1</sup> *J. Anthropol. Inst.* xiii. p. 459.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesiastical Institutions*, p. 674.

<sup>3</sup> *Prim. Cult.* ii. 450.

named (except in mythology) and is not to be represented by idols. He is not moved by sacrifice; he has not the chance; like Death in Greece, 'he only, of all Gods, loves not gifts.' Thus the status of theology does not correspond to what we look for in very low culture. It would scarcely be a paradox to say that the popular Zeus, or Ares, is degenerate from Mungan-ngaur, or the Fuegian being who forbids the slaying of an enemy, and almost literally 'marks the sparrow's fall.'

If we knew all the mythology of Darumulan, we should probably find it (like much of the myth of Pundjel or Bunjil) on a very different level from the theology. There are two currents, the religious and the mythical, flowing together through religion. The former current, religious, even among very low savages, is pure from the magical ghost-propitiating habit. The latter current, mythological, is full of magic, mummary, and scandalous legend. Sometimes the latter stream quite pollutes the former, sometimes they flow side by side, perfectly distinguishable, as in Aztec ethical piety, compared with the bloody Aztec ritualism. Anthropology has mainly kept her eyes fixed on the impure stream, the lusts, mummeries, conjurings, and frauds of priesthoods, while relatively, or altogether, neglecting (as we have shown) what is honest and of good report.

The worse side of religion is the less sacred, and therefore the more conspicuous. Both elements are found co-existing, in almost all races, and nobody, in our total lack of historical information about the beginnings, can say which, if either, element is the earlier, or which, if either, is derived from the other. To suppose that propitiation of corpses and then of ghosts came first is agreeable, and seems logical, to some writers who are not without a bias against all religion as an unscientific superstition. But we know so little! The first missionaries in Greenland supposed that there was not, there, a trace of belief in a Divine Being. 'But when they came to understand their language better, they found quite the reverse to be true . . . and not only so, but they could

plainly gather from a free dialogue they had with some perfectly wild Greenlanders (at that time avoiding any direct application to their hearts) that their ancestors must have believed in a Supreme Being, and did render him some service, which their posterity neglected little by little . . .<sup>1</sup> Mr. Tylor does not refer to this as a trace of Christian Scandinavian influence on the Eskimo.<sup>2</sup>

That line, of course, may be taken. But an Eskimo said to a missionary, 'Thou must not imagine that no Greenlander thinks about these things' (theology). He then stated the argument from design. 'Certainly there must be some Being who made all these things. He must be very good too . . . Ah, did I but know him, how I would love and honour him.' As St. Paul writes: 'That which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them . . . being understood by the things which are made . . . but they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.'<sup>3</sup> In fact, mythology submerged religion. St. Paul's theory of the origin of religion is not that of an 'innate idea,' nor of a direct revelation. People, he says, reached the belief in a God from the Argument for Design. Science conceives herself to have annihilated teleological ideas. But they are among the probable origins of religion, and would lead to the belief in a Creator, whom the Greenlander thought beneficent, and after whom he yearned. This is a very different initial step in religious development, if initial it was, from the feeding of a corpse, or a ghost.

From all this evidence it does not appear how non-polytheistic, non-monarchical, non-Manes-worshipping savages evolved the idea of a relatively supreme, moral, and benevolent Creator, unborn, undying, watching men's lives. 'He can go everywhere, and do everything.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cranz, pp. 198, 199.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal Anthropol. Inst.* xiii. 348-356.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. i. 19. Cranz, i. 199.

<sup>4</sup> In Mr. Curr's work, *The Australian Race*, reports of 'godless' natives are given, for instance, in the Mary River country and in Gippsland. These reports are usually the result of the ignorance or contempt of white observers, cf. Tylor, i. 419.

The reader is referred to the Introduction for additional information about Australian beliefs, and for replies to objections.



## XI

SUPREME GODS NOT NECESSARILY DEVELOPED  
OUT OF 'SPIRITS'

BEFORE going on to examine the high gods of other low savages, I must here again insist on and develop the theory, not easily conceived by us, that the Supreme Being of savages belongs to another branch of faith than ghosts, or ghost-gods, or fetishes, or Totems, and need not be—probably is not—essentially derived from these. We must try to get rid of our theory that a powerful, moral, eternal Being was, from the first, *ex officio*, conceived as 'spirit;' and so was necessarily derived from a ghost.

First, what was the process of development?

We have examined Mr. Tylor's theory. But, to take a practical case: Here are the Australians, roaming in small bands, without more formal rulers than 'headmen' at most; not ancestor worshippers; not polytheists; with no departmental deities to select and aggrandise; not apt to speculate on the *Anima Mundi*. How, then, did they bridge the gulf between the ghost of a soon-forgotten fighting man, and that conception of a Father above, 'all-seeing,' moral, which, under various names, is found all over a huge continent? I cannot see that this problem has been solved or frankly faced.

The distinction between the Australian deity, at his highest power, unpropitiated by sacrifice, and the ordinary, waning, easily forgotten, cheaply propitiated ghost of a tribesman, is essential. It is not easy to show how, in

'the dark backward' of Australian life, the notion of Mungan-ngaur grew from the idea of the ghost of a warrior. But there is no *logical* necessity for the belief in the evolution of this god out of that ghost. These two factors in religion—ghost and god—seem to have perfectly different sources, and it appears extraordinary that anthropologists have not (as far as I am aware) observed this circumstance before.

Mr. Spencer, indeed, speaks frequently of living human beings adored as gods. I do not know that these are found on the lowest levels of savagery, and Mr. Jevons has pointed out that, before you can hail a man as a god, you must have the idea of God. The murder of Captain Cook notoriously resulted from a scientific experiment in theology. 'If he is a god, he cannot be killed.' So they tried with a dagger, and found that the honest captain was but a mortal British mariner—no god at all. 'There are degrees.' Mr. Spencer's men-gods become real gods—after death.<sup>1</sup>

Now the Supreme Being of savage faith, as a rule, never died at all. He belonged to a world that knew not Death.

One cause of our blindness to the point appears to be this: We have from childhood been taught that 'God is a Spirit.' We, now, can only conceive of an eternal being as a 'spirit.' We know that legions of savage gods are now regarded as spirits. And therefore we have never remarked that there is no reason why we should take it for granted that the earliest deities of the earliest men were supposed by them to be 'spirits' at all. These gods might most judiciously be spoken of, not as 'spirits,' but as 'undefined eternal beings.' To us, such a being is necessarily a spirit, but he was by no means necessarily so to an early thinker, who may not yet have reached the conception of a ghost.

A ghost is said, by anthropologists, to have developed into a god. Now, the very idea of a ghost (apart from a

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Sociology*, i. 417, 421. 'The medicine men are treated as gods. . . . The medicine man becomes a god after death.'

wraith or fetch) implies the previous *death* of his proprietor. A ghost is the phantasm of a *dead* man. But anthropologists continually tell us, with truth, that the idea of death as a universal ordinance is unknown to the savage. Diseases and death are things that once did not exist, and that, normally, ought not to occur, the savage thinks. They are, in his opinion, supernormally caused by magicians and spirits. Death came into the world by a blunder, an accident, an error in ritual, a decision of a god who was before Death was. Scores of myths are told everywhere on this subject.<sup>1</sup>

The savage Supreme Being, with added power, omniscience, and morality, is the idealisation of the savage, as conceived of by himself, *minus* fleshly body (as a rule), and *minus* Death. He is not necessarily a 'spirit,' though that term may now be applied to him. He was not originally differentiated as 'spirit' or 'not spirit.' He is a Being, conceived of without the question of 'spirit,' or 'no spirit' being raised; perhaps he was originally conceived of before that question could be raised by men. When we call the Supreme Being of savages a 'spirit' we introduce our own animistic ideas into a conception where it may not have originally existed. If the God is 'the savage himself raised to the *n*<sup>th</sup> power' so much the less of a spirit is he. Mr. Matthew Arnold might as well have said: 'The British Philistine has no knowledge of God. He believes that the Creator is a magnified non-natural man, living in the sky.' The Gippssland or Fuegian or Blackfoot Supreme Being is just a *Being*, anthropomorphic, not a *mrart*, or 'spirit.' The Supreme Being is a *wesen*, Being, *Vui*; we have hardly a term for an immortal existence so undefined. If the being is an idealised first ancestor (as among the Kurnai), he is not, on that account, either man or ghost of man. In the original conception he is a powerful intelligence who was from the first: who was already active long before, by a breach of his laws, an error in the delivery of a message, a breach of ritual, or

<sup>1</sup> I have published a chapter on Myths on the Origin of Death in *Modern Mythology*.

what not, death entered the world. He was not affected by the entry of death, he still exists.

Modern minds need to become familiar with this indeterminate idea of the savage Supreme Being, which, logically, may be prior to the evolution of the notion of ghost or spirit.

But how does it apply when, as by the Kurnai, the Supreme Being is reckoned an ancestor?

It can very readily be shown that, when the Supreme Being of a savage people is thus the idealised First Ancestor, he can never have been envisaged by his worshippers as at any time a *ghost*; or, at least, cannot logically have been so envisaged where the nearly universal belief occurs that death came into the world by accident, or needlessly.

Adam is the mythical first ancestor of the Hebrews, but he died, *ἔπειρ μόνον*, and was not worshipped. Yama, the first of Aryan men who died, was worshipped by Vedic Aryans, but *confessedly* as a ghost-god. Mr. Tylor gives a list of first ancestors deified. The Ancestor of the Mandans did not die, consequently is no ghost; *emigravit*, he 'moved west.' Where the First Ancestor is also the Creator (Dog-rib Indians), he can hardly be, and is not, regarded as a mortal. Tamoi, of the Guaranis, was 'the ancient of heaven,' clearly no mortal man. The Maori Maui was the first who died, but he is not one of the original Maori gods. Haetsh, among the Kamchadals, precisely answers to Yama. Unkulunkulu will be described later.<sup>1</sup>

This is the list: Where the First Ancestor is equivalent to the Creator, and is supreme, he is—from the first—deathless and immortal. When he dies he is a confessed ghost-god.

Now, ghost-worship and dead ancestor-worship are impossible before the ancestor is dead and is a ghost. But the essential idea of Mungan-ngaur, and Baiame, and most of the high gods of Australia, and of other low races, is that *they never died at all*. They belong to the

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* ii. 311-316.

period before death came into the world, like Qat among the Melanesians. They arise in an age that knew not death, and had not reflected on phantasms nor evolved ghosts. They could have been conceived of, in the nature of the case, by a race of immortals who never dreamed of such a thing as a ghost. For these gods, the ghost-theory is not required, and is superfluous, even contradictory. The early thinkers who developed these beings did not need to know that men die (though, of course, they did know it in practice), still less did they need to have conceived by abstract speculation the hypothesis of ghosts. Baiame, Cagn, Bunjil, in their adorers' belief, were *there*; death later intruded among men, but did not affect these divine beings in any way.

The ghost-theory, therefore, by the evidence of anthropology itself, is not needed for the evolution of the high gods of savages. It is only needed for the evolution of ghost-propitiation and genuine dead-ancestor worship. Therefore, the high gods described were not necessarily once ghosts—were not idealised *mortal* ancestors. They were, naturally, from the beginning, from before the coming in of death, immortal Fathers, now dwelling on high. Between them and apotheosised mortal ancestors there is a great gulf fixed—the river of death.

The explicitly stated distinction that the high creative gods never were mortal men, while other gods are spirits of mortal men, is made in every quarter. 'Ancestors *known* to be human were not worshipped as [original] gods, and ancestors worshipped as [original] gods were not believed to have been human.'<sup>1</sup>

Both kinds may have a generic name, such as *kalou*, or *wakan*, but the specific distinction is universally made by low savages. On one hand, original gods; on the other, non-original gods that were once ghosts. Now, this distinction is often calmly ignored; whereas, when any race has developed (like late Scandinavians) the Euhemeristic hypothesis ('all gods were once men'), that hypo-

<sup>1</sup> Jevons, *Introduction*, p. 197.

thesis is accepted as an historical statement of fact by some writers.

It is part of my theory that the more popular ghost-worship of souls of people whom men have loved, invaded the possibly older religion of the Supreme Father. Mighty beings, whether originally conceived of as 'spirits' or not, came, later, under the Animistic theory, to be reckoned as spirits. They even (but not among the lowest savages) came to be propitiated by food and sacrifice. The alternative, for a Supreme Being, when once Animism prevailed, was sacrifice (as to more popular ghost deities) or neglect. We shall find examples of both alternatives. But sacrifice does not prove that a God was, in original conception, a ghost, or even a spirit. 'The common doctrine of the Old Testament is not that God is spirit, but that the spirit [*rûah* = 'wind,' 'living breath'] of Jehovah, going forth from him, works in the world and among men.'<sup>1</sup>

To resume. The high Gods of savagery—moral, all-seeing directors of things and of men—are not explicitly envisaged as spirits at all by their adorers. The notion of soul or spirit is here out of place. We can best describe Pimmeheal, and Napi and Baiame as 'magnified non-natural men,' or undefined beings who were from the beginning and are undying. They are, like the easy Epicurean Gods, *nihil indiga nostri*. Not being ghosts, they crave no food from men, and receive no sacrifice, as do ghosts, or gods developed out of ghosts, or gods to whom the ghost-ritual has been transferred. For this very reason, apparently, they seem to be spoken of by Mr. Grant Allen as 'gods to talk about, not gods to adore; mythological conceptions rather than religious beings.'<sup>2</sup> All this is rather hard on the lowest savages. If they sacrifice to a god, then the god is a hungry ghost; if they don't, then the god is 'a god to talk about, not to adore.' Luckily, the facts of the *Bora* ritual and the instruction given there prove that Mungan-ngaur and other names

<sup>1</sup> Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Evolution of the Idea of God*, p. 176.

*are* gods to adore, by ethical conformity to their will and by solemn ceremony, not merely gods to talk about.

Thus, the highest element in the religion of the lowest savages does not appear to be derived from their theory of ghosts. As far as we can say, in the inevitable absence of historical evidence, the highest gods of savages may have been believed in, as Makers and Fathers and Lords of an indeterminate nature, before the savage had developed the idea of souls out of dreams and phantasms. It is logically conceivable that savages may have worshipped deities like Baïame and Darumulun before they had evolved the notion that Tom, Dick, or Harry has a separable soul, capable of surviving his bodily decease. Deities of the higher sort, by the very nature of savage reflections on death and on its non-original casual character, are prior, or may be prior, or cannot be shown not to be prior, to the ghost theory—the alleged origin of religion. For their evolution the ghost theory is not logically demanded; they can do without it. Yet *they*, and not the spirits, bogles, Mrarts, *Brewin*, and so forth, are the high gods, the gods who have most analogy—as makers, moral guides, rewarders, and punishers of conduct (though that duty is also occasionally assumed by ancestral spirits)—with our civilised conception of the divine. Our conception of God descends not from ghosts, but from the Supreme Beings of non-ancestor-worshipping peoples.

As it seems impossible to point out any method by which low, chiefless, non-polytheistic, non-metaphysical savages (if any such there be) evolved out of ghosts the eternal beings who made the world, and watch over morality: as the people themselves unanimously distinguish such beings from ghost-gods, I take it that such beings never were ghosts. In this case the Animistic theory seems to me to break down completely. Yet these high gods of low savages preserve from dimmest ages of the meanest culture the sketch of a God which our highest religious thought can but fill up to its ideal. Come from what germ he may, Jehovah or Allah does not come from a ghost,

It may be retorted that this makes no real difference. If savages did not invent gods in consequence of a fallacious belief in spirit and soul, still, in some other equally illogical way they came to indulge the hypothesis that they had a Judge and Father in heaven. But, if the ghost theory of the high Gods is wrong, as it is conspicuously superfluous, that *does* make some difference. It proves that a widely preached scientific conclusion may be as spectral as Bathybius. On other more important points, therefore, we may differ from the newest scientific opinion without too much diffident apprehensiveness.



## XII

## SAVAGE SUPREME BEINGS

It is among 'the lowest savages' that the Supreme Beings are most regarded as eternal, moral (as the morality of the tribe goes, or above its habitual practice), and *powerful*. I have elsewhere described the Bushman god Cagn, as he was portrayed to Mr. Orpen by Qing, who 'had never before seen a white man except fighting.' Mr. Orpen got the facts from Qing by inducing him to explain the natives' pictures on the walls of caves. 'Cagn made all things, and we pray to him,' thus: 'O Cagn, O Cagn, are we not thy children? Do you not see us hunger? Give us food.' As to ethics, 'At first Cagn was very good, but he got spoilt through fighting so many things.' 'How came he into the world?' 'Perhaps with those who brought the Sun: only the initiated know these things.' It appears that Qing was not yet initiated in the dance (answering to a high rite of the Australian *Bora*) in which the most esoteric myths were unfolded.<sup>1</sup>

In Mr. Spencer's 'Descriptive Sociology' the religion of the Bushmen is thus disposed of. 'Pray to an insect of the caterpillar kind for success in the chase.' That is rather meagre. They make arrow-poison out of cater-

<sup>1</sup> When I wrote *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (ii. 11-13) I regarded Cagn as 'only a successful and idealised medicine man.' But I now think that I confused in my mind the religious and the mythological aspects of Cagn. One of unknown origin, existing before the sun, a Maker of all things, prayed to, but not in receipt of sacrifice, is no medicine man, except in his myth.

pillars,<sup>1</sup> though Dr. Bleek, perhaps correctly, identifies Cagn with i-kaggen, the insect.

The case of the Andaman Islanders may be especially recommended to believers in the anthropological science of religion. For long these natives were the joy of emancipated inquirers as the 'godless Andamanese.' They only supply Mr. Spencer's 'Ecclesiastical Institutions' with a few instances of the ghost-belief.<sup>2</sup> Yet when the Andamanese are scientifically studied *in situ* by an educated Englishman, Mr. Man, who knows their language, has lived with them for eleven years, and presided over our benevolent efforts 'to reclaim them from their savage state,' the Andamanese turn out to be quite embarrassingly rich in the higher elements of faith. They have not only a profoundly philosophical *religion*, but an excessively absurd *mythology*, like the Australian blacks, the Greeks, and other peoples. If, on the whole, the student of the Andamanese despairs of the possibility of an ethnological theory of religion, he is hardly to be blamed.

The people are probably Negritos, and probably 'the original inhabitants, whose occupation dates from pre-historic times.'<sup>3</sup> They use the bow, they make pots, and are considerably above the Australian level. They have second-sighted men, who obtain status 'by relating an extraordinary dream, the details of which are declared to have been borne out subsequently by some unforeseen event, as, for instance, a sudden death or accident.' They have to produce fresh evidential dreams from time to time.

<sup>1</sup> The omissions in Mr. Spencer's system may possibly be explained by the circumstance that, as he tells us, he collected his facts 'by proxy.' While we find Waitz much interested in and amazed by the benevolent Supreme Being of many African tribes, that personage is only alluded to as 'Alleged Benevolent Supreme Being' in Mr. Spencer's *Descriptive Sociology*, and is usually left out of sight altogether in his *Principles of Sociology* and *Ecclesiastical Institutions*. Yet we have precisely the same kind of evidence of observers for this 'alleged' benevolent Supreme Being as we have for the *canaille* of ghosts and fetishes. If he is a deity of a rather lofty moral conception, of course he need not be propitiated by human sacrifices or cold chickens. That kind of material evidence to the faith in him must be absent by the nature of the case; but the coincident testimony of travellers to belief in a Supreme Being cannot be dismissed as 'alleged.'

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 676, 677.

<sup>3</sup> Man, *J.A.I.* xii. 70.

They see phantasms of the dead, and coincidental hallucinations.<sup>1</sup> All this is as we should expect it to be.

Their religion is probably not due to missionaries, as they always shot all foreigners, and have no traditions of the presence of aliens on the islands before our recent arrival.<sup>2</sup> Their God, Puluga, is 'like fire,' but invisible. He was never born, and is immortal. By him were all things created, except the powers of evil. He knows even the thoughts of the heart. He is angered by *yubda* = sin, or wrong-doing, that is falsehood, theft, grave assault, murder, adultery, bad carving of meat, and (as a crime of witchcraft) by burning wax.<sup>3</sup> 'To those in pain or distress he is pitiful, and sometimes deigns to afford relief.' He is Judge of Souls, and the dread of future punishment 'to some extent is said to affect their course of action in the present life.'<sup>4</sup>

This Being could not be evolved out of the ordinary ghost of a second-sighted man, for I do not find that ancestral ghosts are worshipped, nor is there a trace of early missionary influence, while Mr. Man consulted elderly and, in native religion, well-instructed Andamanese for his facts.

Yet Puluga lives in a large stone house (clearly derived from ours at Port Blair), eats and drinks, foraging for himself, and is married to a green shrimp.<sup>5</sup> There is the usual story of a Deluge caused by the moral wrath of Puluga. The whole theology was scrupulously collected from natives unacquainted with other races.

The account of Andamanese religion does not tally with the anthropological hypothesis. Foreign influence seems to be more than usually excluded by insular conditions and the jealousy of the 'original inhabitants.' The evidence ought to make us reflect on the extreme obscurity of the whole problem.

Anthropological study of religion has hitherto almost entirely overlooked the mysteries of various races, except in so far as they confirm the entry of the young people

<sup>1</sup> Man, *J.A.I.* xii. 96-98.

<sup>2</sup> xii. 156, 157.

<sup>3</sup> xii. 112.

<sup>4</sup> xii. 158.

<sup>5</sup> xii. 158.

into the ranks of the adult. Their esoteric moral and religious teaching is nearly unknown to us, save in a few instances. It is certain that the mysteries of Greece were survivals of savage ceremonies, because we know that they included specific savage rites, such as the use of the *rhombos* to make a whirring noise, and the custom of ritual daubing with dirt; and the sacred *ballets d'action*, in which, as Lucian and Qing say, mystic facts are 'danced out.'<sup>1</sup> But, while Greece retained these relics of savagery, there was something taught at Eleusis which filled minds like Plato's and Pindar's with a happy religious awe. Now, similar 'softening of the heart' was the result of the teaching in the Australian *Bora*: the Yao mysteries inculcate the victory over self; and, till we are admitted to the secrets of all other savage mysteries throughout the world, we cannot tell whether, among mummeries, frivolities, and even license, high ethical doctrines are not presented under the sanction of religion. The New Life, and perhaps the future life, are undeniably indicated in the Australian mysteries by the simulated Resurrection.

I would therefore no longer say, as in 1887, that the Hellenic genius must have added to 'an old medicine dance' all that the Eleusinian mysteries possessed of beauty, counsel, and consolation.<sup>2</sup> These elements, as well as the barbaric factors in the rites, may have been developed out of such savage doctrine as softens the hearts of Australians and Yaos. That this kind of doctrine receives religious sanction is certain, where we know the secret of savage mysteries. It is therefore quite incorrect, and strangely presumptuous, to deny, with almost all anthropologists, the alliance of ethics with religion among the most backward races. We must always remember their secrecy about their inner religion, their frankness about their mythological tales. These we know: the inner religion we ought to begin to recognise that we do not know.

<sup>1</sup> *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, i. 281-288.

<sup>2</sup> Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, 133.

The case of the Andamanese has taught us how vague, even now, is our knowledge, and how obscure is our problem. The example of the Melanesians enforces these lessons. It is hard to bring the Melanesians within any theory. Dr. Codrington has made them the subject of a careful study, and reports that while the European inquirer can communicate pretty freely on common subjects 'the vocabulary of ordinary life is almost useless when the region of mysteries and superstitions is approached.' The Banks Islanders are most free from an Asiatic element of population on one side, and a Polynesian element on the other.

The Banks Islanders 'believe in two orders of intelligent beings different from living men.' (1) Ghosts of the dead, (2) 'Beings who were not, and never had been, human.' This, as we have shown, and will continue to show, is the usual savage doctrine. On the one hand are separable souls of men, surviving the death of the body. On the other are beings, creators, who were before men were, and before death entered the world. It is impossible, logically, to argue that these beings are only ghosts of real remote ancestors, or of ideal ancestors. These higher beings are not safely to be defined as 'spirits,' their essence is vague, and, we repeat, the idea of their existence might have been evolved *before the ghost theory was attained by men*. Dr. Codrington says, 'the conception can hardly be that of a purely spiritual being, yet, by whatever name the natives call them, they are such as in English must be called spirits.'

That is our point. 'God is a spirit,' these beings are Gods, therefore 'these are spirits.' But to their initial conception our idea of 'spirit' is lacking. They are beings who existed before death, and still exist.

The beings which never were human, never died, are *Vui*, the ghosts are *Tamate*. Dr. Codrington uses 'ghosts' for *Tamate*, 'spirits' for *Vui*. But as to render *Vui* 'spirits' is to yield the essential point, we shall call *Vui* 'beings,' or, simply, *Vui*. A *Vui* is not a spirit that has

been a ghost; the story may represent him as if a man, 'but the native will always maintain that he was something different, and deny to him the fleshly body of a man.'<sup>1</sup>

This distinction, ghost on one side—original being, not a man, not a ghost of a man, on the other—is radical and nearly universal in savage religion. Anthropology, neglecting the essential distinction insisted on, in this case, by Dr. Codrington, confuses both kinds under the style of 'spirits,' and derives both from ghosts of the dead. Dr. Codrington, it should be said, does not generalise, but confines himself to the savages of whom he has made a special study. But, from the other examples of the same distinction which we have offered, and the rest which we shall offer, we think ourselves justified in regarding the distinction between a primeval, eternal, being or beings, on one hand, and ghosts or spirits exalted from ghost's estate, on the other, as common, if not universal.

There are corporeal and incorporeal Vuis, but the body of the corporeal Vui is 'not a human body.'<sup>2</sup> The chief is Qat, 'still at hand to help and invoked in prayers.' 'Qat, Marawa, look down upon me, smooth the sea for us two, that I may go safely over the sea!' Qat 'created men and animals,' though, in a certain district, he is claimed as an *ancestor* (p. 268). Two strata of belief have here been confused.

The myth of Qat is a jungle of *facetiae* and frolic, with one or two serious incidents, such as the beginning of Death and the coming of Night. His mother was, or became, a stone; stones playing a considerable part in the superstitions.

The incorporeal Vuis, 'with nothing like a human life, have a much higher place than Qat and his brothers in the religious system.' They have neither names, nor shapes, nor legends, they receive sacrifice, and are in some uncertain way connected with stones; these stones usually bear a fanciful resemblance to fruits or animals (p. 275). The only sacrifice, in Banks Islands, is that of shell-

<sup>1</sup> J.A.I. 267.

<sup>2</sup> J.A.I. x. 267.

money. The mischievous spirits are Tamate, ghosts of men. There is a belief in *mana* (magical *rapport*). Dr. Codrington cannot determine the connection of this belief with that in spirits. Mana is the uncanny, is X, the unknown. A revived impression of sense is *nunuai*, as when a tired fisher, half asleep at night, feels the 'draw' of a salmon, and automatically strikes.<sup>1</sup> The common ghost is a bag of *nunuai*, as living man, in the opinion of some philosophers, is a bag of 'sensations.' Ghosts are only seen as spiritual lights, which so commonly attend hallucinations among the civilised. Except in the prayers to Qat and Marawa, prayer only invokes the dead (p. 285). 'In the western islands the offerings are made to ghosts, and consumed by fire; in the eastern (Banks) isles they are made to spirits (beings, *Vui*), and there is no sacrificial fire.' Now, the worship of ghosts goes, in these isles, with the higher culture, 'a more considerable advance in the arts of life;' the worship of non-ghosts, *Vui*, goes with the lower material culture.<sup>2</sup> This is rather the reverse of what we should expect, in accordance with the anthropological theory. According, however, to our theory, Animism and ghost-worship may be of later development, and belong to a higher level of culture, than worship of a being, or beings, that never were ghosts. In Leper's Isle, 'ghosts do not appear to have prayers or sacrifices offered to them,' but cause disease, and work magic.<sup>3</sup>

The belief in the soul, in Melanesia, does *not* appear to proceed 'from their dreams or visions in which deceased or absent persons are presented to them, for they do not appear to believe that the soul goes out from the dreamer, or presents itself as an object in his dreams,' nor does belief in other spirits seem to be founded on 'the appearance of life or motion in inanimate things.'<sup>4</sup>

To myself it rather looks as if all impressions had

<sup>1</sup> P. 281. This is a *nunuai* with which I am familiar. Flying fish, in Banks Island, take the rôle of salmon. The natives think it real, but without form or substance.

<sup>2</sup> Codrington, *Melanesia*, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> *J.A.I.* x. 294.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* x. 313.

their *nunuai*, real, bodiless, persistent, after-images; that the soul is the complex of all of these *nunuai*; that there is in the universe a kind of magical ether, called *mana*, possessed, in different proportions, by different men, *Vui*, *tamate*, and material objects, and that the *atai* or *ataro* of a man dead, his ghost, retains its old, and acquires new *mana*.<sup>1</sup> It is an odd kind of metaphysic to find among very backward and isolated savages. But the lesson of Melanesia teaches us how very little we really know of the religion of low races, how complex it is, how hardly it can be forced into our theories, if we take it as given in our knowledge, allow for our ignorance, and are not content to select facts which suit our hypothesis, while ignoring the rest. On a higher level of material culture than the Melanesians are the Fijians.

Fijian religion, as far as we understand, resembles the others in drawing an impassable line between ghosts and eternal gods. The word *Kalou* is applied to all supernal beings, and mystic or magical things alike. It seems to answer to *mana* in New Zealand and Melanesia, to *wakan* in North America, and to *fée* in old French, as when Perrault says, about Bluebeard's key, 'now the key was *fée*.' All Gods are *Kalou*, but all things that are *Kalou* are not Gods. Gods are *Kalou vu*; deified ghosts are *Kalou yalo*. The former are eternal, without beginning of days or end of years; the latter are subject to infirmity and even to death.<sup>2</sup>

The Supreme Being, if we can apply the term to him, is Ndengei, or Degei, 'who seems to be an impersonation of the abstract idea of eternal existence.' This idea is not easily developed out of the conception of a human soul which has died into a ghost and may die again. His myth represents him as a serpent, emblem of eternity, or a body of stone with a serpent's head. His one manifestation is given by eating. So neglected is he that a song exists about his lack of worshippers and gifts. 'We made men,' says Ndengei, 'placed them on earth,

<sup>1</sup> *J.A.I.* x. 300.

<sup>2</sup> Williams's *Fiji*, p. 218. See Mr. Thomson's remarks cited later.



and yet they share to us only the under shell.'<sup>1</sup> Here is an extreme case of the self-existent creative Eternal, mythically lodged in a serpent's body, and reduced to a jest.

It is not easy to see any explanation, if we reject the hypothesis that this is an old, fallen form of faith, 'with scarcely a temple.' The other unborn immortals are mythical warriors and adulterers, like the popular deities of Greece. Yet Ndengei receives prayers through two sons of his, mediating deities. The priests are possessed, or inspired, by spirits and gods. One is not quite clear as to whether Ndengei is an inspiring god or not; but that prayers are made to him is inconsistent with the belief in his eternal inaction. A priest is represented as speaking for Ndengei, probably by inspiration. 'My own mind departs from me, and then, when it is truly gone, my god speaks by me,' is the account of this 'alternating personality' given by a priest.<sup>2</sup>

After informing us that Ndengei is starved, Mr. Williams next tells about offerings to him, in earlier days, of hundreds of hogs.<sup>3</sup> He sends rain on earth. Animals, men, stones, may all be *Kalou*. There is a Hades as fantastic as that in the Egyptian 'Book of the Dead,' and second sight flourishes.

The mysteries include the sham raising of the dead, and appear to be directed at propitiatory ghosts rather than at Ndengei. There are scenes of license; 'particulars of almost incredible indecency have been privately forwarded to Dr. Tylor.'<sup>4</sup>

Suppose a religious reformer were to arise in one of the many savage tribes who, as we shall show, possess, but neglect, an Eternal Creator. He would do what, in the secular sphere, was done by the Mikado of Japan. The Mikado was a political Dendid or Ndengei—an awful, withdrawn, impotent potentate. Power was wielded by the Tycoon. A Mikado of genius asserted himself; hence arose modern Japan. In the same way, a religious reformer like

<sup>1</sup> *Fiji*, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 230.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 228.

<sup>4</sup> *J.A.I.* xiv. 30.

Khuen Ahten in Egypt would preach down minor gods, ghosts and sacred beasts, and proclaim the primal Maker, Ndengei, Dendid, Mtanga. 'The king shall hae his ain again.' Had it not been for the Prophets, Israel, by the time that Greece and Rome knew Israel, would have been worshipping a horde of little gods, and even beasts and ghosts, while the Eternal would have become a mere name—perhaps, like Ndengei and Atahocan and Unkulunkulu, a jest. The Old Testament is the story of the prolonged effort to keep Jehovah in His supreme place. To make and to succeed in that effort was the *differentia* of Israel. Other peoples, even the lowest, had, as we prove, the germinal conception of a God—assuredly not demonstrated to be derived from the ghost theory, logically in no need of the ghost theory, everywhere explicitly contrasted with the ghost theory. 'But their foolish heart was darkened.'

It is impossible to prove, historically, which of the two main elements in belief—the idea of an Eternal Being or Beings, or the idea of surviving ghosts—came first into the minds of men. The idea of primeval Eternal Beings, as understood by savages, does not depend on, or require, the ghost theory. But, as we almost always find ghosts and a Supreme Being together, where we find either, among the lowest savages, we have no historical ground for asserting that either is prior to the other. Where we have no evidence to the belief in the Maker, we must not conclude that no such belief exists. Our knowledge is confused and scanty; often it is derived from men who do not know the native language, or the native sacred language, or have not been trusted with what the savage treasures as his secret. Moreover, if anywhere ghosts are found without gods, it is an inference from the argument that an idea familiar to very low savage tribes, like the Australians, and falling more and more into the background elsewhere, though still extant and traceable, might, in certain cases, be lost and forgotten altogether.

To take an example of half-forgotten deity. Mr. Im Thurn, a good observer, has written on 'The Animism of the Indians of British Guiana.' Mr. Im Thurn justly says :

'The man who above all others has made this study possible is Mr. Tylor.' But it is not unfair to remark that Mr. Im Thurn naturally sees most distinctly that which Mr. Tylor has taught him to see—namely, Animism. He has also been persuaded, by Mr. Dorman, that the Great Spirit of North American tribes is 'almost certainly nothing more than a figure of European origin, reflected and transmitted almost beyond recognition on the mirror of the Indian mind.' That is not my opinion: I conceive that the Red Indians had their native Eternal, like the Australians, Fijians, Andamanese, Dinkas, Yao, and so forth, as will be shown later.

Mr. Im Thurn, however, dilates on the dream origin of the ghost theory, giving examples from his own knowledge of the difficulty with which Guiana Indians discern the hallucinations of dreams from the facts of waking life. Their waking hallucinations are also so vivid as to be taken for realities.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Im Thurn adopts the hypothesis that, from ghosts, 'a belief has arisen, but very gradually, in higher spirits, and, eventually, in a Highest Spirit; and, keeping pace with the growth of these beliefs, a habit of reverence for and worship of spirits.' On this hypothesis, the spirit latest evolved, and most worshipful, ought, of course, to be the 'Highest Spirit.' But the reverse, as usual, is the case. The Guiana Indians believe in the continued, but not in the everlasting, existence of a man's ghost.<sup>2</sup> They believe in no spirits which were *not* once tenants of material bodies.<sup>3</sup>

The belief in a Supreme Spirit is only attained 'in the highest form of religion'—Andamanese, for instance—as Mr. Im Thurn uses 'spirit' where we should say 'being.' 'The Indians of Guiana know no god.'<sup>4</sup>

'But it is true that various words have been found in all, or nearly all, the languages of Guiana which have been supposed to be names of a Supreme Being, God, a Great Spirit, in the sense which those phrases bear in the language of the higher religions.'

<sup>1</sup> *J.A.I.* xi. 361-366.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* xi. 374.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* xi. 376.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* xi. 376.

Being interpreted, these Guiana names mean—

*The Ancient One,*  
*The Ancient One in Sky-land,*  
*Our Maker,*  
*Our Father,*  
*Our Great Father.*

‘None of these in any way involves the attributes of a god.’

The Ancient of Days, Our Father in Sky-land, Our Maker, do rather convey the sense of God to a European mind. Mr. Im Thurn, however, decides that the beings thus designated were supposed ancestors who came into Guiana from some other country, ‘sometimes said to have been that entirely natural country (?) which is separated from Guiana by the ocean of the air.’<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Im Thurn casually observed (having said nothing about morals in alliance with Animism):

‘The fear of unwittingly offending the countless visible and invisible beings . . . kept the Indians very strictly within their own rights and from offending against the rights of others.’

This remark dropped out at a discussion of Mr. Im Thurn’s paper, and clearly demonstrated that even a very low creed ‘makes for righteousness.’<sup>2</sup>

Probably few who have followed the facts given here will agree with Mr. Im Thurn’s theory that ‘Our Maker,’ ‘Our Father,’ ‘The Ancient One of the Heaven,’ is merely an idealised human ancestor. He falls naturally into his place with the other high gods of low savages. But we need much more information on the subject than Mr. Im Thurn was able to give.

His evidence is all the better, because he is a loyal follower of Mr. Tylor. And Mr. Tylor says: ‘Savage Animism is almost devoid of that ethical element which to the educated modern mind is the very mainspring of practical religion.’<sup>3</sup> ‘Yet it keeps the Indians very strictly

<sup>1</sup> J.A.I. xi. 378.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 382.

<sup>3</sup> *Prim. Cult.* ii. 360.

within their own rights and from offending the rights of others.' Our own religion is rarely so successful.<sup>1</sup>

In the Indians of Guiana we have an alleged case of a people still deep in the animistic or ghost-worshipping case, who, by the hypothesis, have not yet evolved the idea of a god at all.

When the familiar names for God, such as Maker, Father, Ancient of Days, occur in the Indian language, Mr. Im Thurn explains the neglected Being who bears these titles as a remote deified ancestor. Of course, when a Being with similar titles occurs where ancestors are not worshipped, as in Australia and the Andaman Islands, the explanation suggested by Mr. Im Thurn for the problem of religion in Guiana, will not fit the facts.

It is plain that, *a priori*, another explanation is conceivable. If a people like the Andamanese, or the Australian tribes whom we have studied, had such a conception as that of Puluga, or Baïame, or Mungan-ngaur and then, *later*, developed ancestor-worship with its propitiatory sacrifices and ceremonies, ancestor-worship, as the newest evolved and infinitely the most practical form of cult, would gradually thrust the belief in a Puluga, or Mungan-ngaur, or Cagn into the shade. The ancestral spirit, to speak quite plainly, can be 'squared' by the people in whom he takes a special interest for family reasons. The equal Father of all men *cannot* be 'squared,' and declines (till corrupted by the bad example of ancestral ghosts) to make himself useful to one man rather than to another. For these very intelligible, simple, and practical reasons, if the belief in a Mungan-ngaur came first in evolution, and the belief in a practicable bribable family ghost came second, the ghost-cult would inevitably crowd out the God-cult.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Conceivably, however, the Guiana spirits who have so much moral influence, exert it by magical charms. 'The belief in the power of charms for good or evil produces not only honesty, but a great amount of gentle dealing,' says Livingstone, of the Africans. However they work, the spirits work for righteousness.

<sup>2</sup> Obviously there could be no Family God before there was the institution of the Family.

The name of the Father and Maker would become a mere survival, *nominis umbra*, worship and sacrifice going to the ancestral ghost. That explanation would fit the state of religion which Mr. Im Thurn has found, rightly or wrongly, in British Guiana.

But, if the idea of a universal Father and Maker came last in evolution, as a refinement, then, of course, it ought to be the newest, and therefore the most fashionable and potent of Guianese cults. Precisely the reverse is said to be the case. Nor can the belief indicated in such names as Father and Maker be satisfactorily explained as a refinement of ancestor-worship, because, we repeat, it occurs where ancestors are not worshipped.

These considerations, however unpleasant to the devotees of Animism, or the ghost theory, are not, in themselves, illogical, nor contradictory of the theory of evolution, which, on the other hand, fits them perfectly well. That god thrives best who is most suited to his environment. Whether an easy-going, hungry ghost-god with a liking for his family, or a moral Creator not to be bribed, is better suited to an environment of not especially scrupulous savages, any man can decide. Whether a set of not particularly scrupulous savages will readily evolve a moral unbribeable Creator, when they have a serviceable family ghost-god eager to oblige, is a question as easily resolved.

Beyond all doubt, savages who find themselves under the watchful eye of a moral deity whom they cannot 'square' will desert him as soon as they have evolved a practicable ghost-god, useful for family purposes, whom they *can* square. No less manifestly, savages, who already possess a throng of serviceable ghost-gods, will not enthusiastically evolve a moral Being who despises gifts, and only cares for obedience. 'There is a great deal of human nature in man,' and, if Mr. Im Thurn's description of the Guianese be correct, everything we know of human nature, and of evolution, assures us that the Father, or Maker, or Ancient of Days came first; the ghost-gods, last. What has here been said about the

Indians of Guiana (namely, that they are now mere ghost and spirit worshippers, with only a name surviving to attest a knowledge of a Father and Maker in Heaven) applies equally well to the Zulus. The Zulus are the great standing type of an animistic or ghost-worshipping race without a God. But, had they a God (on the Australian pattern) whom they have forgotten, or have they not yet evolved a God out of Animism?

The evidence, collected by Dr. Callaway, is honest, but confused. One native, among others, put forward the very theory here proposed by us as an alternative to that of Mr. Im Thurn. 'Unkulunkulu' (the idealised but despised First Ancestor) 'was not worshipped [by men]. For it is not worship when people see things, as rain, or food, or corn, and say, "Yes, these things were made by Unkulunkulu . . . . Afterwards they [men] had power to change those things, that they might become the Amatongos"' [might belong to the ancestral spirits]. *They took them away from Unkulunkulu.*<sup>1</sup>

Animism supplanted Theism. Nothing could be more explicit. But, though we have found an authentic Zulu text to suit our provisional theory, the most eminent philosophical example must not reduce us into supposing that this text settles the question. Dr. Callaway collected great masses of Zulu answers to his inquiries, and it is plain that a respondent, like the native theologian whom we have cited, may have adapted his reply to what he had learned of Christian doctrine. Having now the Christian notion of a Divine Creator, and knowing, too, that the unworshipped Unkulunkulu is said to have 'made things,' while only ancestral spirits, are worshipped, the native may have inferred that worship (by Christians given to the Creator) was at some time transferred by the Zulus from Unkulunkulu to the Amatongo. The truth is that both the anthropological theory (spirits first, Gods last), and our theory (Supreme Being first, spirits next) can find warrant in Dr. Callaway's valuable collections. For that reason, the problem must be solved

<sup>1</sup> Callaway, *Rel. of Amazulu*, p. 17.

after a survey of the whole field of savage and barbaric religion; it cannot be settled by the ambiguous case of the Zulus alone.

Unkulunkulu is represented as 'the First Man, who broke off in the beginning.' 'They are ancestor-worshippers,' says Dr. Callaway, 'and believe that their first ancestor, the First Man, was the Creator.'<sup>1</sup> But they may, like many other peoples, have had a different original tradition, and have altered it, just because they are now such fervent ancestor-worshippers. Unkulunkulu was prior to Death, which came among men in the usual mythical way.<sup>2</sup> Whether Unkulunkulu still exists, is rather a moot question: Dr. Callaway thinks that he does not.<sup>3</sup> If not, he is an exception to the rule in Australia, Andaman, among the Bushmen, the Fuegians, and savages in general, who are less advanced in culture than the Zulus. The idea, then, of a Maker of things who has ceased to exist occurs, if at all, not in a relatively primitive, but in a relatively late religion. On the analogy of pottery, agriculture, the use of iron, villages, hereditary kings, and so on, the notion of a dead Maker is late, not early. It occurs where men have iron, cattle, agriculture, kings, houses, a disciplined army, *not* where men have none of these things. The Zulu godless ancestor-worship, then, by parity of reasoning, is, like their material culture, not an early but a late development. The Zulus 'hear of a King which is above'—'the heavenly King.'<sup>4</sup> 'We did not hear of him first from white men. . . . But he is not like Unkulunkulu, who, we say, made all things.'

Here may be dimly descried the ideas of a God, and a subordinate demiurge. 'The King is above, Unkulunkulu is beneath.' The King above punishes sin, striking the sinner by lightning. Nor do the Zulus know how they have sinned. 'There remained only that word about the heaven,' 'which,' says Dr. Callaway, 'implies that there might have been other words which are now lost.' There is great confusion of thought. Unkulunkulu made the

<sup>1</sup> Callaway, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 19.



heaven, where the unknown King reigns, a hard task for a First Man.<sup>1</sup> 'In process of time we have come to worship the Amadhlozi (spirits) only, because we know not what to say about Unkulunkulu.'<sup>2</sup> 'It is on that account, then, that we seek out for ourselves the Amadhlozi (spirits), that we may not always be thinking about Unkulunkulu.'

All this attests a faint lingering shadow of a belief too ethereal, too remote, for a practical conquering race, which prefers intelligible serviceable ghosts, with a special regard for their own families.

Ukoto, a very old Zulu, said: 'When we were children it was said "The Lord is in heaven." . . . They used to point to the Lord on high; we did not hear his name.' Unkulunkulu was understood, by this patriarch, to refer to immediate ancestors, whose names and genealogies he gave.<sup>3</sup> 'We heard it said that the Creator of the world was the Lord who is above; people used always, when I was growing up, to point towards heaven.'

A very old woman was most reluctant to speak of Unkulunkulu; at last she said, 'Ah, it is he in fact who is the Creator, who is in heaven, of whom the ancients spoke.' Then the old woman began to babble humorously of how the white men made all things. Again, Unkulunkulu is said to have been created by Utilexo. Utilexo was invisible, Unkulunkulu was visible, and so got credit not really his due.<sup>4</sup> When the heaven is said to be the Chief's (the chief being a living Zulu) 'they do not believe what they say,' the phrase is a mere hyperbolical compliment.<sup>5</sup>

On this examination of the evidence, it certainly seems as logical to conjecture that the Zulus had once such an idea of a Supreme Being as lower races entertain, and then nearly lost it; as to say that Zulus, though a monarchical race, have not yet developed a King-God out of the throng of spirits (Amatongo). The Zulus, the Norsemen of the South, so to speak, are a highly practical military race. A Deity at all abstract was not to their liking. Serviceable family spirits, who continually provided an excuse

<sup>1</sup> Callaway, pp. 20, 21.

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 49, 50.

<sup>4</sup> P. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 26, 27.

<sup>5</sup> P. 122.

for a dinner of roast beef, were to their liking. The less developed races do not kill their flocks commonly for food. A sacrifice is needed as a pretext. To the gods of Andamanese, Bushmen, Australians, no sacrifice is offered. To the Supreme Being of most African peoples no sacrifice is offered. There is no festivity in the worship of these Supreme Beings, no feasting, at all events. They are not to be 'got at' by gifts or sacrifices. The Amatongo are to be 'got at,' are bribable, supply an excuse for a good dinner, and thus the practical Amatongo are honoured, while, in the present generation of Zulus, Unkulunkulu is a joke, and the Lord in Heaven is the shadow of a name. Clearly this does not point to the recent but to the remote development of the higher ideas, now superseded by spirit-worship.

We shall next see how this view, the opposite of the anthropological theory, works when applied to other races, especially to other African races.

## XIII

*MORE SAVAGE SUPREME BEINGS*

IF many of the lowest savages known to us entertain ideas of a Supreme Being such as we find among Fuegians, Australians, Bushmen, and Andamanese, are there examples, besides the Zulus, of tribes higher in material culture who seem to have had such notions, but to have partly forgotten or neglected them? Miss Kingsley, a lively, observant, and unprejudiced, though rambling writer, gives this very account of the Bantu races. Oblivion, or neglect, will show itself in leaving the Supreme Being alone, as he needs no propitiation, while devoting sacrifice and ritual to fetishes and ghosts. That this should be done is perfectly natural if the Supreme Being (who wants no sacrifice) were the first evolved in thought, while venal fetishes and spirits came in as a result of the ghost theory. But if, as a result of the ghost theory, the Supreme Being came last in evolution, he ought to be the most fashionable object of worship, the latest developed, the most powerful, and most to be propitiated. He is the reverse.

To take an example: the Dinkas of the Upper Nile ('godless,' says Sir Samuel Baker) 'pay a very theoretical kind of homage to the all-powerful Being, dwelling in heaven, whence he sees all things. He is called "Dendid" (great rain, that is, universal benediction?).' He is omnipotent, but, being all beneficence, can do no evil; so, not being feared, he is not addressed in prayer. The evil

spirit, on the other hand, receives sacrifices. The Dinkas have a strange old chant :

‘ At the beginning, when Dendid made all things,  
     He created the Sun,  
 And the Sun is born, and dies, and comes again !  
     He created the Stars,  
 And the Stars are born, and die, and come again !  
     He created Man,  
 And Man is born, and dies, and returns no more ! ’  
 It is like the lament of Moschus.<sup>1</sup>

Russeger compares the Dinkas, and all the neighbouring peoples who hold the same beliefs, to modern Deists.<sup>2</sup> They are remote from Atheism and from cult ! Suggestions about an ancient Egyptian influence are made, but popular Egyptian religion was not monotheistic, and priestly thought could scarcely influence the ancestors of the Dinkas. M. Lejean says these peoples are so practical and utilitarian that missionary religion takes no hold on them. Mr. Spencer does not give the ideas of the Dinkas, but it is not easy to see how the too beneficent Dendid could be evolved out of ghost-propitiation, ‘ the origin of all religions.’ Rather the Dinkas, a practical people, seem to have simply forgotten to be grateful to their Maker ; or have decided, more to the credit of the clearness of their heads than the warmth of their hearts, that gratitude he does not want. Like the French philosopher they cultivate *l'indépendance du cœur*, being in this matter strikingly unlike the Pawnees.

Let us now take a case in which ancestor-worship, and no other form of religion (beyond mere superstitions), has been declared to be the practice of an African people. Mr. Spencer gives the example of natives of the south-eastern district of Central Africa described by Mr. Macdonald in ‘Africana.’<sup>3</sup> The dead man becomes a ghost-god, receives prayer and sacrifice, is called a Mulungu (=great

<sup>1</sup> Lejean, *Rev. des Deux Mondes*, April 1862, p. 760. Citing for the chant, Beltrame, *Dizionario della lingua denka*, MS.

<sup>2</sup> Waitz, ii. 74.

<sup>3</sup> 1882.

ancestor or =sky ?), is preferred above older spirits, now forgotten ; such old spirits may, however, have a mountain top for home, a great chief being better remembered ; the mountain god is prayed to for rain ; higher gods were probably similar local gods in an older habitat of the Yao.<sup>1</sup>

Such is in the main Mr. Spencer's *résumé* of Mr. Duff Macdonald's report. He omits whatever Mr. Macdonald says about a Being among the Yaos, analogous to the Dendid of the Dinkas, or the Darumulun of Australia, or the Huron Ahone. Yet analysis detects, in Mr. Macdonald's report, copious traces of such a Being, though Mr. Macdonald himself believes in ancestor-worship as the Source of the local religion. Thus, Mulungu, or Mlungu, used as a proper name, 'is said to be the great spirit, *msimu*, of all men, a spirit formed by adding all the departed spirits together.'<sup>2</sup> This is a singular stretch of savage philosophy, and indicates (says Mr. Macdonald) 'a grasping after a Being who is the totality of all individual existence. . . . If it fell from the lips of civilised men instead of savages, it would be regarded as philosophy. Expressions of this kind among the natives are partly traditional, and partly dictated by the big thoughts of the moment.' Philosophy it is, but a philosophy dependent on the ghost theory.

I go on to show that the Wayao have, though Mr. Spencer omits him, a Being who precisely answers to Darumulun, if stripped (perhaps) of his ethical aspect. On this point we are left in uncertainty, just because Mr. Macdonald could not ascertain the secrets of his mysteries, which, in Australia, have been revealed to a few Europeans.

Where Mulungu is used as a proper name, it 'certainly points to a personal Being, by the Wayao sometimes said to be the same as Mtanga. At other times he is a Being that possesses many powerful servants, but is himself kept a good deal beyond the scene of earthly affairs, like the gods of Epicurus.'

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical Institutions*, 631.

<sup>2</sup> *Africana*, i. 66.

This is, of course, precisely the feature in African theology which interests us. The Supreme Being, in spite of the potency which his supposed place as latest evolved out of the ghost-world should naturally give him, is neglected, either as half forgotten, or for philosophical reasons. For these reasons Epicurus and Lucretius make their gods *otiosi*, unconcerned, and the Wayao, with their universal collective spirit, are no mean philosophers.

'This Mulungu' or Mtanga, 'in the world beyond the grave, is represented as assigning to spirits their proper places,' whether for ethical reasons or not we are not informed.<sup>1</sup> Santos (1586) says 'they acknowledge a God who, both in this world and the next, measures retribution for the good or evil done in this.'

'In the native hypothesis about creation "the people of Mulungu" play a very important part.' These ministers of his who do his pleasure are, therefore, as is Mulungu himself, regarded as prior to the existing world. Therefore they cannot, in Wayao opinion, be ghosts of the dead at all; nor can we properly call them 'spirits.' They are *beings*, original, creative, but undefined. The word Mulungu, however, is now applied to spirits of individuals, but whether it means 'sky' (Salt) or whether it means 'ancestor' (Bleek), it cannot be made to prove that Mulungu himself was originally envisaged as 'spirit.' For, manifestly, suppose that the idea of powerful beings, undefined, came first in evolution, and was followed by the ghost idea, that idea might then be applied to explaining the pre-existent creative powers.

Mtanga is by 'some' localised as the god of Mangochi, an Olympus left behind by the Yao in their wanderings. Here, some hold, his voice is still audible. 'Others say that Mtanga never was a man . . . he was concerned in the first introduction of men into the world. He gets credit for . . . making mountains and rivers. He is intimately associated with a year of plenty. He is called Mchimwene juene, 'a very chief.' He has a kind of evil

<sup>1</sup> *Africana*, i. 67.

opposite, *Chitowe*, but this being, the Satan of the creed, 'is a child or subject of Mtanga,' an evil angel, in fact.<sup>1</sup>

The thunder god, Mpambe, in Yao, Njasi (lightning) is also a minister of the Supreme Being. 'He is sent by Mtanga with rain.' Europeans are cleverer than natives, because we 'stayed longer with the people of God (Mulungu).'

I do not gather that, though associated with good crops, Mtanga or Mulungu receives any sacrifice or propitiation. 'The chief addresses his own god ;' <sup>2</sup> the chief 'will not trouble himself about his great-great-grandfather ; he will present his offering to his own immediate predecessor, saying, 'O father, I do not know all your relatives ; you know them all : invite them to feast with you.' <sup>3</sup>

'All the offerings are supposed to point to some want of the spirit.' Mtanga, on the other hand, is *nihil indiga nostri*.

A village god is given beer to drink, as Indra got Soma. A dead chief is propitiated by human sacrifices. I find no trace of any gift to Mtanga. His mysteries are really unknown to Mr. Macdonald : they were laughed at by a travelled and 'emancipated' Yao.<sup>4</sup>

'These rites are supposed to be inviolably concealed by the initiated, who often say that they would die if they revealed them.' <sup>5</sup>

How can we pretend to understand a religion if we do not know its secret ? That secret, in Australia, yields the certainty of the ethical character of the Supreme Being. Mr. Macdonald says about the initiator (a grotesque figure) :—

'He delivers lectures, and is said to give much good advice . . . the lectures condemn selfishness, and a selfish person is called *mvisichana*, that is, "uninitiated."'

There could not be better evidence of the presence of the ethical element in the religious mysteries. Among the Yao, as among the Australian Kurnai, the central secret lesson of religion is the lesson of unselfishness.

<sup>1</sup> *Africana*, i. 71, 72.

<sup>2</sup> i. 88.

<sup>3</sup> i. 68.

<sup>4</sup> i. 130.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*.

It is not stated that Mtanga instituted or presides over the mysteries. Judging from the analogy of Eleusis, the Bora, the Red Indian initiations, and so on, we may expect this to be the belief; but Mr. Macdonald knows very little about the matter.

The legendary tales say 'all things in this world were made by "God."' 'At first there were not people, but "God" and beasts.' 'God' here, is Mlungu. The other statement is apparently derived from existing ancestor-worship, people who died became 'God' (Mlungu). But God is prior to death, for the Yao have a form of the usual myth of the origin of death, also of sleep: 'death and sleep are one word, they are of one family.' God dwells on high, while a malevolent 'great one,' who disturbed the mysteries and slew the initiated, was turned into a mountain.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of information confessedly defective, I have extracted from Mr. Spencer's chosen authority a mass of facts, pointing to a Yao belief in a primal being, maker of mountains and rivers; existent before men were; not liable to death—which came late among them—beneficent; not propitiated by sacrifice (as far as the evidence goes); moral (if we may judge by the analogy of the mysteries), and yet occupying the religious background, while the foreground is held by the most recent ghosts. To prove Mr. Spencer's theory, he ought to have given a full account of this being, and to have shown how he was developed out of ghosts which are forgotten in inverse ratio to their distance from the actual generation. I conceive that Mr. Spencer would find a mid-point between a common ghost and Mtanga, in a ghost of a chief attached to a mountain, the place and place-name preserving the ghost's name and memory. But it is, I think, a far cry from such a chief's ghost to the pre-human, angel-served Mtanga.

Of ancestor worship and ghost worship, we have abundant evidence. But the position of Mtanga raises one of these delicate and crucial questions which cannot

<sup>1</sup> *Africana*, i. 279-301.



be solved by ignoring their existence. Is Mtanga evolved out of an ancestral ghost? If so, why, as greatest of divine beings, 'Very Chief,' and having powerful ministers under him, is he left unpropitiated, unless it be by moral discourses at the mysteries? As a much more advanced idea than that of a real father's ghost, he ought to be much later in evolution, fresher in conception, and more adored. How do we explain his lack of adoration? Was he originally envisaged as a ghost at all, and, if so, by what curious but uniform freak of savage logic is he regarded as prior to men, and though a ghost, prior to death? Is it not certain that such a being could be conceived of by men who had never dreamed of ghosts? Is there any logical reason why Mtanga should not be regarded as originally on the same footing as Mungan-gaur, but now half forgotten and neglected, for practical or philosophical reasons?

On these problems light is thrown by a successor of Mr. Spencer's authority, Mr. Duff Macdonald, in the Blantyre Mission. This gentleman, the Rev. David Clement Scott, has published 'A Cyclopædic Dictionary of the Mang'anja Language in British Central Africa.'<sup>1</sup> Looking at ancestral spirits first, we find *Mzimu*, 'spirits of the departed, supposed to come in dreams.' Though abiding in the spirit world, they also haunt thickets, they inspire Mlauli, prophets, and make them rave and utter predictions. Offerings are made to them. Here is a prayer: 'Watch over me, my ancestor, who died long ago; tell the great spirit at the head of my race from whom my mother came.' There are little hut-temples, and the chief directs the sacrifices of food, or of animals. There are religious pilgrimages, with sacrifice, to mountains. God, like men in this region, has various names, as Chiuta, 'God in space and the rainbow sign across; 'Mpambe, 'God Almighty' (or rather 'pre-excellent'); Mlezi, 'God the Sustainer,' and Mulungu, 'God who is spirit.' Mulungu=God, 'not spirits or fetish.' 'You can't put the plural, as God is One,' say the natives.

<sup>1</sup> Edinburgh, 1892.

'There are no idols called gods, and spirits are spirits of people who have died, not gods.' Idols are *Zitunzi-zitunzi*. 'Spirits are supposed to be with Mulungu.' God made the world and man. Our author says 'when the chief or people sacrifice it is to God,' but he also says that they sacrifice to ancestral spirits. There is some confusion of ideas here: Mr. Macdonald says nothing of sacrifice to Mtanga.

Mr. Scott does not seem to know more about the Mysteries than Mr. Macdonald, and his article on Mulungu does not much enlighten us. Does Mulungu, as Creative God, receive sacrifice, or not? <sup>1</sup> Mr. Scott gives no instance of this, under *Nsembe* (sacrifice), where ancestors, or hill-dwelling ghosts of chiefs, are offered food; yet, as we have seen, under *Mulungu*, he avers that the chiefs and people do sacrifice to God. He appears to be confusing the Creator with spirits, and no reliance can be placed on this part of his evidence. 'At the back of all this' (sacrifice to spirits) 'there is God.' If I understand Mr. Scott, sacrifices are really made only to spirits, but he is trying to argue that, after all, the theistic conception is at the back of the animistic practice, thus importing his theory into his facts. His theory would, really, be in a better way, if sacrifice is *not* offered to the Creator, but this had not occurred to Mr. Scott.

It is plain, in any case, that the religion of the Africans in the Blantyre region has an element not easily to be derived from ancestral spirit-worship, an element not observed by Mr. Spencer.

Nobody who has followed the examples already adduced will be amazed by what Waitz calls the 'surprising result' of recent inquiries among the great negro race. Among the branches where foreign influence is least to be suspected, we discover, behind their more conspicuous fetishisms and superstitions, something which we cannot exactly call Monotheism, yet which tends in

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally Mr. Macdonald shows that, contrary to Mr. Spencer's opinion, these savages have words for dreams and dreaming. They interpret dreams by a system of symbols, 'a canoe is ill luck,' and 'dreams go by contraries.'

that direction.<sup>1</sup> Waitz quotes Wilson for the fact that, their fetishism apart, they adore a Supreme Being as the Creator: and do not honour him with sacrifice.

The remarks of Waitz may be cited in full:

'The religion of the negro may be considered by some as a particularly rude form of polytheism and may be branded with the special name of fetishism. It would follow, from a minute examination of it, that—apart from the extravagant and fantastic traits, which are rooted in the character of the negro, and which radiate therefrom over all his creations—in comparison with the religions of other savages it is neither very specially differentiated nor very specially crude in form.

'But this opinion can be held to be quite true only while we look at the *outside* of the negro's religion, or estimate its significance from arbitrary pre-suppositions, as is specially the case with Ad. Wuttke.

'By a deeper insight, which of late several scientific investigators have succeeded in attaining, we reach, rather, the surprising conclusion that several of the negro races—on whom we cannot as yet prove, and can hardly conjecture, the influence of a more civilised people—in the embodying of their religious conceptions are further advanced than almost all other savages, so far that, even if we do not call them monotheists, we may still think of them as standing on the boundary of monotheism, seeing that their religion is also mixed with a great mass of rude superstition which, in turn, among other peoples, seems to overrun completely the purer religious conceptions.'

This conclusion as to an element of pure faith in negro religion would not have surprised Waitz, had recent evidence as to the same creed among lower savages lain before him as he worked.

This volume of his book was composed in 1860. In 1872 he had become well aware of the belief in a good Maker among the Australian natives, and of the absence among them of ancestor worship.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Waitz, *Anthropologie*, ii. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Waitz und Gerland, *Anthropologie*, vi. 796-799 and 809. In 1874

Waitz's remarks on the Supreme Being of the Negro are well worth noting, from his unconcealed astonishment at the discovery.

Wilson's observations on North and South Guinea religion were published in 1856. After commenting on the delicate task of finding out what a savage religion really is, he writes: 'The belief in one great Supreme Being, who made and upholds all things, is universal.'<sup>1</sup> The names of the being are translated 'Maker,' 'Preserver,' 'Benefactor,' 'Great Friend.' Though compact of all good qualities, the being has allowed the world to 'come under the control of evil spirits,' who, alone, receive religious worship. Though he leaves things uncontrolled, yet the chief being (as in Homer) ratifies the Oath, at a treaty, and is invoked to punish criminals when ordeal water is to be drunk. So far, then, he has an ethical influence. 'Grossly wicked people' are buried outside of the regular place. Fetishism prevails, with spiritualism, and Wilson thinks that mediums might pick up some good tricks in Guinea. He gives no examples. Their inspired men do things 'that cannot be accounted for,' by the use of narcotics.

The South Guinea Creator, Anyambia (=good spirit?), is good, but capricious. He has a good deputy, Ombwiri (spelled 'Mburi' by Miss Kingsley); *he alone has no priests*, but communicates directly with men. The neighbouring Shekuni have mysteries of the Great Spirit. No details are given. This great being, Mwetyi, witnesses covenants and punishes perjury. This people are ancestor-worshippers, but their Supreme Being is not said to receive sacrifice, as ghosts do, while he is so far from being powerless, like Unkulunkulu, that, but for fear of his wrath, 'their national treaties would have little or no force.'<sup>2</sup> Having no information about the mysteries, of course, we know nothing of other moral influences which

Mr. Howitt's evidence on the moral element in the mysteries was not published. Waitz scouts the idea that the higher Australian beliefs are of European origin. 'Wir sehen vielmehr uralte Trümmer ähnlicher Mythologie in ihnen,' (vi. 798) flotsam from ideas of immemorial antiquity.

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, p. 392.

are, or may be, exercised by these great, powerful, and not wholly otiose beings.

The celebrated traveller, Mungo Park, who visited Africa in 1805, had good opportunities of understanding the natives. He did not hurry through the land with a large armed force, but alone, or almost alone, paid his way with his brass buttons. 'I have conversed with all ranks and conditions upon the subject of their faith,' he says, 'and can pronounce, without the smallest shadow of doubt, that the belief in one God and in a future state of reward and punishment is entire and universal among them.' This cannot strictly be called monotheism, as there are many subordinate spirits who may be influenced by 'magical ceremonies.' But if monotheism means belief in One Spirit alone, or religious regard paid to One Spirit alone, it exists nowhere—no, not in Islam.

Park thinks it remarkable that 'the Almighty' only receives prayers at the new moon (of sacrifice to the Almighty he says nothing), and that, being the creator and preserver of all things, he is 'of so exalted a nature that it is idle to imagine the feeble supplications of wretched mortals can reverse the decrees and change the purpose of unerring Wisdom.' The new moon prayers are mere matters of tradition; 'our fathers did it before us.' 'Such is the blindness of unassisted nature,' says Park, who is not satirising, in Swift's manner, the prayers of Presbyterians at home on Yarrow.

Thus, the African Supreme Being is unpropitiated, while inferior spirits are constrained by magic or propitiated with food.

We meet our old problem: How has this God, in the conception of whom there is so much philosophy, developed out of these hungry ghosts? The influence of Islam can scarcely be suspected, Allah being addressed, of course, in endless prayers, while the African god receives none. Indeed, it would be more plausible to say that Mahomet borrowed Allah from the widespread belief which we are studying, than that the negro's Supreme Being was borrowed from Allah.

Park had, as we saw, many opportunities of familiar discussion with the people on whose mercies he threw himself.

'But it is not often that the negroes make their religious opinions the subject of conversation; when interrogated, in particular, concerning their ideas of a future state, they express themselves with great reverence, but endeavour to shorten the discussion by saying, "*Mo o mo inta allo*" ("No man knows anything about it").'<sup>1</sup>

Park himself, in extreme distress, and almost in despair, chanced to observe the delicate beauty of a small moss-plant, and, reflecting that the Creator of so frail a thing could not be indifferent to any of His creatures, plucked up courage and reached safety.<sup>2</sup> He was not of the negro philosophy, and is the less likely to have invented it. The new moon prayer, said in a whisper, was reported to Park, 'by many different people,' to contain 'thanks to God for his kindness during the existence of the past moon, and to solicit a continuation of his favour during the new one.' This, of course, may prove Islamite influence, and is at variance with the general tendency of the religious philosophy as described.

We now arrive at a theory of the Supreme Being among a certain African race which would be entirely fatal to my whole hypothesis on this topic, if it could be demonstrated correct in fact, and if it could be stretched so as to apply to the Australians, Fuegians, Andamanese, and other very backward peoples. It is the hypothesis that the Supreme Being is a 'loan-god,' borrowed from Europeans.

The theory is very lucidly set forth in Major Ellis's 'Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast.'<sup>3</sup> Major Ellis's opinion coincides with that of Waitz in his 'Introduction to Anthropology' (an opinion to which Waitz does not seem bigoted)—namely, that 'the original form of all religion is a raw, unsystematic polytheism,' nature being peopled by inimical powers or spirits, and

<sup>1</sup> Park's *Journey*, i. 274, 275, 1815.

<sup>2</sup> P. 245.

<sup>3</sup> London, 1887.

everyone worshipping what he thinks most dangerous or most serviceable. There are few general, many local or personal, objects of veneration.<sup>1</sup> Major Ellis only met this passage when he had formed his own ideas by observation of the Tshi race. We do not pretend to guess what 'the original form of all religion' may have been; but we have given, and shall give, abundant evidence for the existence of a loftier faith than this, among peoples much lower in material culture than the Tshi races, who have metals and an organised priesthood. They occupy, in small villages (except Coomassie and Djuabin), the forests of the Gold Coast. The mere mention of Coomassie shows how vastly superior in civilisation the Tshis (Ashantis and Fantis) are to the naked, houseless Australians. Their inland communities, however, are 'mere specks in a vast tract of impenetrable forest.' The coast people have for centuries been in touch with Europeans, but the 'Tshi-speaking races are now much in the same condition, both socially and morally, as they were at the time of the Portuguese discovery.'<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, Major Ellis explains their Supreme Being as the result of European influence! *A priori* this appears highly improbable. That a belief should sweep over all these specks in impenetrable forest, from the coast-tribes in contact with Europeans, and that this belief should, though the most recent, be infinitely the least powerful, cannot be regarded as a plausible hypothesis. Moreover, on Major Ellis's theory the Supreme Beings of races which but recently came for the first time in contact with Europeans, Supreme Beings kept jealously apart from European ken, and revered in the secrecy of ancient mysteries, must also, by parity of reason, be the result of European influence. Unfortunately, Major Ellis gives no evidence for his statements about the past history of Tshi religion. Authorities he must have, and references would be welcome.

'With people in the condition in which the natives of the Gold Coast now are, religion is not in any way allied

<sup>1</sup> Ellis, pp. 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup> P. 4.

with moral ideas.' <sup>1</sup> We have given abundant evidence that among much more backward tribes morals rest on a religious sanction. If this be not so on the Gold Coast we cannot accept these relatively advanced Fantis and Ashantis as representing the 'original' state of ethics and religion, any more than those people with cities, a king, a priesthood, iron, and gold, represent the 'original' material condition of society. Major Ellis also shows that the Gods exact chastity from aspirants to the priesthood. <sup>2</sup> The present beliefs of the Gold Coast are kept up by organised priesthoods as 'lucrative business.' <sup>3</sup> Where there is no lucre and no priesthood, as among more backward races, this kind of business cannot be done. On the Gold Coast men can only approach gods through priests. <sup>4</sup> This is degeneration.

Obviously, if religion began in a form relatively pure and moral, it *must* degenerate, as civilisation advances, under priests who 'exploit' the lucrative, and can see no money in the pure elements of belief and practice. That the lucrative elements in Christianity were exploited by the clergy, to the neglect of ethics, was precisely the complaint of the Reformers. From these lucrative elements the creed of the Apostles was free, and a similar freedom marks the religion of Australia or of the Pawnees. We cannot possibly, then, expect to find the 'original' state of religion among a people subdued to a money-grubbing priesthood, like the Tshi races. Let religion begin as pure as snow, it would be corrupted by priestly trafficking in its lucrative animistic aspect. And priests are developed relatively late.

Major Ellis discriminates Tshi gods as—

1. General, worshipped by an entire tribe or more tribes.
2. Local deities of river, hill, forest, or sea.
3. Deities of families or corporations.
4. Tutelary deities of individuals.

The second class, according to the natives, were appointed by the first class, who are 'too distant or indifferent to interfere ordinarily in human affairs.' Thus,

<sup>1</sup> Ellis, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> P. 120.

<sup>3</sup> P. 15.

<sup>4</sup> P. 125.



the Huron god, Ahone, punishes nobody. He is all sweetness and light, but has a deputy god, called Okeus. On our hypothesis this indifference of high gods suggests the crowding out of the great disinterested God by venal animistic competition. All of class II. 'appear to have been originally malignant.' Though, in native belief, class I. was prior to, and 'appointed' class II., Major Ellis thinks that malignant spirits of class II. were raised to class I. as if to the peerage, while classes III. and IV. 'are clearly the product of priesthood'—therefore late.

Major Ellis then avers that when Europeans reached the Gold Coast, in the fifteenth century, they 'appear to have found' a Northern God, Tando, and a Southern God, Bobowissi, still adored. Bobowissi makes thunder and rain, lives on a hill, and receives, or received, human sacrifices. But, 'after an intercourse of some years with Europeans,' the villagers near European forts 'added to their system a new deity, whom they termed Nana Nyan-kupon. This was the God of the Christians, borrowed from them, and adapted under a new designation, meaning 'Lord of the sky.' (This is conjectural. *Nyankum* = rain. *Nyansa* has 'a later meaning, "craft."')<sup>1</sup>

Now Major Ellis, later, has to contrast Bosman's account of fetishism (1700) with his own observations. According to Bosman's native source of information, men then selected their own fetishes. These are *now* selected by priests. Bosman's authority was wrong—or priesthood has extended its field of business. Major Ellis argues that the revolution from amateur to priestly selection of fetishes could not occur in 190 years, 'over a vast tract of country, amongst peoples living in semi-isolated communities, in the midst of pathless forests, where there is but little opportunity for the exchange of ideas, *and where we know they have been uninfluenced by any higher race.*'

Yet Major Ellis's theory is that this isolated people *were* influenced by a higher race, to the extent of adopting a totally new Supreme Being, from Europeans, a being

<sup>1</sup> Ellis, pp. 24, 25.

whom they in no way sought to propitiate, and who was of no practical use. And this they did, he says, not under priestly influence, but in the face of priestly opposition.<sup>1</sup>

Major Ellis's logic does not appear to be consistent. In any case we ask for evidence how, in the 'impenetrable forests,' did a new Supreme Deity become universally known? Are we certain that travellers (unquoted) did not discover a deity with no priests, or ritual, or 'money in the concern,' later than they discovered the blood-stained, conspicuous, lucrative Bobowissi? Why was Nyankupon, the supposed new god of a new powerful set of strangers, left wholly unpropitiated? The reverse was to be expected.

Major Ellis writes: 'Almost certainly the addition of one more to an already numerous family' of gods, 'was strenuously resisted by the priesthood,' who, confessedly, are adding new lower gods every day! Yet Nyankupon is universally known, in spite of priestly resistance. Nyankupon, I presume = Anzambi, Anyambi, Nyambi, Nzambi, Anzam, Nyam, the Nzam of the Fans, 'and of all Bantu coast races, the creator of man, plants, animals, and the earth; he takes no further interest in the affair.'<sup>2</sup> The crowd of *spirits* take only too much interest; and, therefore, are the lucrative element in religion.

It is not very easy to believe that Nyam, under all his names, was picked up from the Portuguese, and passed apparently from negroes to Bantu all over West Africa, despite the isolation of the groups, and the resistance of the priesthood among tribes 'uninfluenced by any higher race.'

Nyam, like Major Ellis's class I., appoints a subordinate god to do his work: he is truly good, and governs the malevolent spirits.<sup>3</sup>

The spread of Nyankupon, as described by Major Ellis, is the more remarkable, since 'five or six miles from the sea, or even less, the country was a *terra incognita* to Europeans.'<sup>4</sup> Nyankupon was, it is alleged,

<sup>1</sup> Ellis, p. 189.    <sup>2</sup> Miss Kingsley, p. 442.    <sup>3</sup> Ellis, p. 229.    <sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 25.

adopted, because our superiority proved Europeans to be 'protected by a deity of greater power than any of those to which they themselves' (the Tshi races) 'offered sacrifices.'

Then, of course, Nyankupon would receive the best sacrifices of all, as the most powerful deity? Far from that, Nyankupon received no sacrifice, and had no priests. No priest would have a traditional way of serving him. As the unlucky man in Voltaire says to his guardian angel, 'It is well worth while to have a presiding genius,' so the Tshis and Bantu might ironically remark, 'A useful thing, a new Supreme Being!' A quarter of a continent or so adopts a new foreign god, and leaves him *planté là*; unserved, unhonoured, and unsung. He therefore came to be thought too remote, or too indifferent, 'to interfere directly in the affairs of the world.' 'This idea was probably caused by the fact that the natives had not experienced any material improvement in their condition . . . although they also had become followers of the god of the whites.'<sup>1</sup>

But that was just what they had not done! Even at Magellan's Straits, the Fuegians picked up from a casual Spanish sea-captain and adored an image of Cristo. Name and effigy they accepted. The Tshi people took neither effigy nor name of a deity from the Portuguese settled among them. They neither imitated Catholic rites nor adapted their own; they prayed not, nor sacrificed to the 'new' Nyankupon. Only his name and the idea of his nature are universally diffused in West African belief. He lives in no definite home, or hill, but 'in Nyankupon's country.' Nyankupon, at the present day, is 'ignored rather than worshipped,' while Bobowissi has priests and offerings.

It is clear that Major Ellis is endeavouring to explain, by a singular solution (namely, the borrowing of a God from Europeans), and that a solution improbable and inadequate, a phenomenon of very wide distribution. Nyankupon cannot be explained apart from Taaroa,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 27.

Puluga, Ahone, Ndengei, Dendid, and Ta-li-y-Tooboo, Gods to be later described, who cannot, by any stretch of probabilities, be regarded as of European origin. All of these represent the primeval Supreme Being, more or less or altogether stripped, under advancing conditions of culture, of his ethical influence, and crowded out by the horde of useful greedy ghosts or ghost gods, whose business is lucrative. Nyankupon has no pretensions to be, or to have been a 'spirit.'<sup>1</sup>

Major Ellis's theory is a natural result of his belief in a tangle of polytheism as 'the original state of religion.' If so, there was not much room for the natural development of Nyankupon, in whom 'the missionaries find a parallel to the Jahveh of the Jews.'<sup>2</sup> On our theory Nyankupon takes his place in the regular process of the corruption of theism by animism.

The parallel case of Nzambi Mpungu, the Creator among the Fiorts (a Bantu stock), is thus stated by Miss Kingsley:

'I have no hesitation in saying I fully believe Nzambi Mpungu to be a purely native god, and that he is a great god over all things, but the study of him is even more difficult than the study of Nzambi, because the Jesuit missionaries who gained so great an influence over the Fiorts in the sixteenth century identified him with Jehovah, and worked on the native mind from that stand-point. Consequently semi-mythical traces of Jesuit teaching linger, even now, in the religious ideas of the Fiorts.'<sup>3</sup>

Nzambi Mpungu lives 'behind the firmament.' 'He takes next to no interest in human affairs;' which is not a Jesuit idea of God.

In all missionary accounts of savage religion, we have to guard against two kinds of bias. One is the bias which makes the observer deny any religion to the native race, except devil-worship. The other is the bias which

<sup>1</sup> Ellis, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> 'African Religion and Law,' *National Review*, September 1897, p. 132.

leads him to look for traces of a pure primitive religious tradition. Yet we cannot but observe this reciprocal phenomenon: missionaries often find a native name and idea which answer so nearly to their conception of God that they adopt the idea and the name, in teaching. Again, on the other side, the savages, when first they hear the missionaries' account of God, recognise it, as do the Hurons and Bakwain, for what has always been familiar to them. This is recorded in very early pre-missionary travels, as in the book of William Strachey on Virginia (1612), to which we now turn. The God found by Strachey in Virginia cannot, by any latitude of conjecture, be regarded as the result of contact with Europeans. Yet he almost exactly answers to the African Nyankupon, who is explained away as a 'loan-god.' For the belief in relatively pure creative beings, whether they are morally adored, without sacrifice, or merely neglected, is so widely diffused, that Anthropology must ignore them, or account for them as 'loan-gods'—or give up her theory!

## XIV

*AHONE. TI-RA-WÁ. NÀ-PI. PACHACAMAC.*

*TUI LAGA. TAA-ROA*

IN this chapter it is my object to set certain American Creators beside the African beings whom we have been examining. We shall range from Hurons to Pawnees and Blackfeet, and end with Pachacamac, the supreme being of the old Inca civilisation, with Tui Laga and Taa-roa. It will be seen that the Hurons have been accidentally deprived of their benevolent Creator by a bibliographical accident, while that Creator corresponds very well with the Peruvian Pachacamac, often regarded as a mere philosophical abstraction. The Pawnees will show us a Creator involved in a sacrificial ritual, which is not common, while the Blackfeet present a Creator who is not envisaged as a spirit at all, and, on our theory, represents a very early stage of the theistic conception.

To continue the argument from analogy against Major Ellis's theory of the European origin of Nyan-kupon, it seems desirable first to produce a parallel to his case, and to that of his blood-stained subordinate deity, Bobowissi, from a quarter where European influence is absolutely out of the question. Virginia was first permanently colonised by Englishmen in 1607, and the 'Historie of Travaile into Virginia,' by William Strachey, Gent., first Secretary of the Colony, dates from the earliest years (1612-1616). It will hardly be suggested, then, that the natives had already adopted *our* Supreme Being, especially as Strachey says that the

native priests strenuously opposed the Christian God. Strachey found a house-inhabiting, agricultural, and settled population, under chiefs, one of whom, Powhattan, was a kind of Bretwalda. The temples contained the dried bodies of the *veroances*, or aristocracy, beside which was their Okeus, or Oki, an image 'ill favouredly carved,' all black dressed, 'who doth them all the harm they suffer. He is propitiated by sacrifices of their own children' (probably an error) 'and of strangers.'

Mr. Tylor quotes a description of this Oki, or Okeus, with his idol and bloody rites, from Smith's 'History of Virginia' (1632).<sup>1</sup> The two books, Strachey's and Smith's, are here slightly varying copies of one original. But, after censuring Smith's (and Strachey's) hasty theory that Okeus is 'no other than a devil,' Mr. Tylor did not find in Smith what follows in Strachey. Okeus has human sacrifices, like Bobowissi, 'whilst the great God (the priests tell them) who governes all the world, and makes the sun to shine, creatyng the moone and starrs his companyons . . . they calling (*sic*) Ahone. The good and peaceable God requires no such dutyes, nor needs to be sacrificed unto, for he intendeth all good unto them.' Okeus, on the contrary, 'looking into all men's accions, and examining the same according to the severe scheme of justice, punisheth them. . . . Such is the misery and thraldome under which Sathan hath bound these wretched miscreants.'

As if, in Mr. Strachey's own creed, Satan does not punish, in hell, the offences of men against God!

Here, then, in addition to a devil (or rather a divine police magistrate), and general fetishism and nature worship, we find that the untutored Virginian is equipped with a merciful Creator, without idol, temple, or sacrifice, as needing nought of ours. It is by the merest accident, the use of Smith's book (1632) instead of Strachey's book (1612), that Mr. Tylor is unaware of these essential facts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Pinkerton, xiii. pp. 13, 39; *Prim. Cult.* ii. 342.

<sup>2</sup> See Preface to this edition for corrected statement.

Dr. Brinton, like Mr. Tylor, cites Smith for the nefarious or severe Okeus, and omits any mention of Ahone, the benevolent Creator.<sup>1</sup> Now, Strachey's evidence is early (1612), is that of a well-educated man, fond of airing his Greek, and not prejudiced in favour of these worshippers of 'Sathan.' In Virginia he found the unpropitiated loving Supreme Being, beside a subordinate, like Nyankupon beside Bobowissi in Africa.

Each highest deity, in Virginia or on the Gold Coast, is more or less eclipsed in popular esteem by nascent polytheism and nature worship. This is precisely what we should expect to find, if Ahone, the Creator, were earlier in evolution, while Okeus and the rest were of the usual greedy class of animistic corruptible deities, useful to priests. This could not be understood while Ahone was left out of the statement.<sup>2</sup>

Probably Mr. Strachey's narrative justifies, by analogy, our suspicion of Major Ellis's theory that the African Supreme Being is of European origin. The purpose in the Ahone-Okeus creed is clear. God (Ahone) is omnipotent and good, yet calamities beset mankind. How are these to be explained? Clearly as penalties for men's sins, inflicted, not by Ahone, but by his lieutenant, Okeus. But that magistrate can be, and is, appeased by sacrifices, which it would be impious, or, at all events, useless, to offer to the Supreme Being, Ahone. It is a logical creed, but how was the Supreme Being evolved out of the ghost of a 'people-devouring king' like Powhattan? The facts, very fairly attested, do not fit the anthropological theory. It is to be remarked that Strachey's Ahone is a much

<sup>1</sup> *Myths of the New World*, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> There is a description of Virginia, by W. Strachey, including Smith's remarks, published in 1612. Strachey interwove some of this work with his own MS. in the British Museum, dedicated to Bacon (Verulam). This MS. was edited by Mr. Major, for the Hakluyt Society, in 1849, with a glossary, by Strachey, of the native language. The remarks on religion are in Chapter VII. The passage on Ahone occurs in Strachey (1612), but not in Smith (1632), in Pinkerton. I owe to the kindness of Mr. Edmund Gosse photographs of the drawings accompanying the MS. Strachey's story of sacrifice of children (pp. 94, 95) seems to refer to nothing worse than the initiation into the mysteries.



less mythological conception than that which, on very good evidence, he attributes to the Indians of the Patowemeck River. Their Creator is spoken of as 'a godly Hare,' who receives their souls into Paradise, whence they are reborn on earth again, as in Plato's myth. They also regard the four winds as four Gods. How the god took the mythological form of a hare is diversely explained.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Ahone-Okeus creed corresponds to the Nyankupon-Bobowissi creed. The American faith is certainly not borrowed from Europe, so it is less likely that the African creed is borrowed.

As illustrations of the general theory here presented, we may now take two tribal religions among the North American Indians. The first is that of the equestrian Pawnees, who, thirty years ago, were dwelling on the Loup Fork in Nebraska. The buffaloes have since been destroyed, the lands seized, and the Pawnees driven into a 'Reservation,' where they are, or lately were, cheated and oppressed in the usual way. They were originally known to Europeans in four hordes, the fourth being the Skidi or Wolf Pawnees. They seem to have come into Kansas and Nebraska, at a date relatively remote, from Mexico, and are allied with the Lipans and Tonkaways of that region. The Tonkaways are a tribe who, in a sacred mystery, are admonished to 'live like the wolves,' in exactly the same way as were the Hirpi (wolf tribe), of Mount Soracte, who practised the feat of walking unhurt through fire.<sup>2</sup> The Tonkaways regard the Pawnees, who also have a wolf tribe, as a long-separated branch of their race. If, then, they are of Mexican origin, we might expect to find traces of Aztec ritual among the Pawnees.

Long after they obtained better weapons they used flint-headed arrows for slaying the only two beasts which it was lawful to sacrifice, the deer and the buffalo. They have long been a hunting and also an agricultural people. The corn was given to them originally by the Ruler:

<sup>1</sup> See Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, for a philological theory.

<sup>2</sup> Compare 'The Fire Walk' in *Modern Mythology*.

their god, *Ti-ra-wá*, 'the Spirit Father.' They offer the sacrifice of a deer with peculiar solemnity, and are a very prayerful people. The priest 'held a relation to the Pawnees and their deity not unlike that occupied by Moses to Jehovah and the Israelites.' A feature in ritual is the sacred bundles of unknown contents, brought from the original home in Mexico. The Pawnees were created by *Ti-ra-wá*. They believe in a happy future life, while the wicked die, and there is an end of them. They cite their dreams of the dead as an argument for a life beyond the tomb. 'We see ourselves living with *Ti-ra-wá*!' An evil earlier race, which knew not *Ti-ra-wá*, was destroyed by him in the Deluge; evidence is found in large fossil bones, and it would be an interesting inquiry whether such fossils are always found where the story of a 'sin-flood' occurs. If so, fossils must be universally diffused.

As is common, the future life is attested, not only by dreams, but in the experience of men who 'have died' and come back to life, like Secret Pipe Chief, who told the story to Mr. Grinnell. These visions in a state of apparent death are not peculiar to savages, and, no doubt, have had much effect on beliefs about the next world.<sup>1</sup> Ghosts are rarely seen, but auditory hallucinations, as of a voice giving good advice in time of peril, are regarded as the speech of ghosts. The beasts are also friendly, as fellow children with men of *Ti-ra-wá*. To the Morning Star the Skidi or Wolf Pawnees offered on rare occasions a captive man. The ceremony was not unlike that of the Aztecs, though less cruel. Curiously enough, the slayer of the captive had instantly to make a mock flight, as in the Attic *Bouphonia*. This, however, was a rite paid to the Morning Star, not to *Ti-ra-wá*, 'the power above that moves the universe and controls all things.' Sacrifice to *Ti-ra-wá* was made on rare and solemn occasions out of his two chief gifts, deer and buffalo. 'Through

<sup>1</sup> Compare St. Augustine's curious anecdote in *De Cura pro Mortuis habenda* about the dead and revived Curio. The founder of the new Sioux religion, based on hypnotism, 'died' and recovered.

corn, deer, buffalo, and the sacred bundles, we worship *Ti-ra-wá.*'

The flesh was burned in the fire, while prayers were made with great earnestness. In the old Skidi rite the women told the fattened captive what they desired to gain from the Ruler. It is occasionally said that the human sacrifice was made to *Ti-ra-wá* himself. The sacrificer not only fled, but fasted and mourned. It is possible that, as among the Aztecs, the victim was regarded as also an embodiment of the God, but this is not certain, the rite having long been disused. Mr. Grinnell got the description from a very old Skidi. There was also a festival of thanks to *Ti-ra-wá* for corn. During a sacred dance and hymn the corn is held up to the Ruler by a woman. Corn is ritually called 'The Mother,' as in Peru.<sup>1</sup> 'We are like seed, and we worship through the Corn.'

Disease is caused by evil spirits, and many American soldiers were healed by Pawnee doctors, though their hurts had refused to yield to the treatment of the United States Army Surgeons.<sup>2</sup>

The miracles wrought by Pawnee medicine men, under the eyes of Major North, far surpass what is told of Indian jugglery. But this was forty years ago, and it is probably too late to learn anything of these astounding performances of naked men on the hard floor of a lodge. 'Major North told me' (Mr. Grinnell) 'that he saw with his own eyes the doctors make the corn grow,' the doctor not manipulating the plant, as in the Mango trick, but standing apart and singing. Mr. Grinnell says: 'I have never found any one who could even suggest an explanation.'

This art places great power in the hands of the doctors, who exhibit many other prodigies. It is notable that in this religion we hear nothing of ancestor-worship; all that is stated as to ghosts has been reported. We find the cult of an all-powerful being, in whose ritual sacrifice is the only feature that suggests ghost-worship. The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Demeter.

<sup>2</sup> Major North, for long the U.S. Superintendent of the Pawnees.

popular tales and historical reminiscences of the last generation entirely bear out by their allusions Mr. Grinnell's account of the Pawnee faith, in which the ethical element chiefly consists in a sense of dependence on and touching gratitude to Ti-ra-wá, as shown in fervent prayer. Theft he abhors, he applauds valour, he punishes the wicked by annihilation, the good dwell with him in his heavenly home. He is addressed as A-ti-us ta-kaw-a, 'Our father in all places.'

It is not so easy to see how this Being was developed out of ancestor-worship, of which we find no traces among Pawnees. For ancestor-worship among the Sioux, it is usual to quote a remark of one Prescott, an interpreter: 'Sometimes an Indian will say, "Wah negh on she wan da," which means, "Spirits of the dead have mercy on me." Then they will add what they want. That is about the amount of an Indian's prayer.'<sup>1</sup> Obviously, when we compare Mr. Grinnell's account of Pawnee religion, based on his own observations, and those of Major North, and Mr. Dunbar, who has written on the language of the tribe, we are on much safer ground, than when we follow a contemptuous, half-educated European.

The religion of the Blackfoot Indians appears to be a ruder form of the Pawnee faith. Whether the differences arise from tribal character, or from decadence, or because the Blackfoot belief is in an earlier and more backward condition than that of the Pawnees, it is not easy to be certain. As in China, there exists a difficulty in deciding whether the Supreme Being is identical with the great nature-god; in China the Heaven, among the Blackfeet the Sun; or is prior to him in conception, or has been, later, substituted for him, or placed beside him. The Blackfoot mythology is low, crude, and, except in tales of Creation, is derisive. As in Australia, there is a specific difference of tone between mythology and religion.

The Blackfoot country runs east from the summit of the Rocky Mountains, to the mouth of the Yellowstone

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, iii. 287.

river on the Missouri, then west to the Yellowstone sources, across the Rocky Mountains to the Beaverhead, thence to their summit.

As to spirits, the Blackfeet believe in, or at least tell stories of, ghosts, which conduct themselves much as in our old-fashioned ghost stories. They haunt people in a rather sportive and irresponsible way. The souls or shadows of respectable persons go to the bleak country called the Sand Hills, where they live in a dull, monotonous kind of Sheol. The shades of the wicked are 'earth-bound' and mischievous, especially ghosts of men slain in battle. They cause paralysis and madness, but dread interiors of lodges; they only 'tap on the lodge-skins.' Like many Indian tribes, the Blackfeet have the Eurydice legend. A man grieving for his dead wife finds his way to Hades, is pitied by the dead, and allowed to carry the woman back with him, under certain ritual prohibitions, one of which he unhappily infringes. The range of this deeply touching story among the Red Men, and its close resemblance to the tale of Orpheus, is one of the most curious facts in mythology. Mr. Grinnell's friend Young Bear, when lost with his wife in a fog, heard a Voice, 'It is well. Go on, you are going right.' 'The top of my head seemed to lift up. It seemed as if a lot of needles were running into it. . . . This must have been a ghost.' As the wife also heard the Voice it was probably human, not hallucinatory.

Animals receive the usual amount of friendly respect from the Blackfeet. They have also an inchoate polytheism, 'Above Persons, Ground Persons, and Under Water Persons.' Of the first, Thunder is most important, and is worshipped. There is the Cold Maker, a white figure on a white horse, the Wind, and so on.

The Creator is Nà-pi, Old Man; Dr. Brinton thinks he is a personification of Light, but Mr. Grinnell reckons it absurd to attribute so abstract a conception to the Blackfeet. Nà-pi is simply a primal Being, an Immortal Man,<sup>1</sup> who was before Death came into the world, concern-

<sup>1</sup> As envisaged here, Nà-pi is not a spirit. The question of spirit or

ing which one of the usual tales of the Origin of Death is told. 'All things that he had made understood him when he spoke to them—birds, animals, and people,' as in the first chapters of Genesis. With Nà-pi, Creation worked on the lines of adaptation to environment. He put the bighorn on the prairie. There it was awkward, so he set it on rocky places, where it skipped about with ease. The antelope fell on the rocks, so he removed it to the level prairie. Nà-pi created man and woman out of clay, but the folly of the woman introduced Death. Nà-pi, as a Prometheus, gave fire, and taught the forest arts. He inculcated the duty of prayer; his will should be done by emissaries in the shape of animals. Then he went to other peoples. The misfortunes of the Indians arise from disobedience to his laws.

Chiefs were elective, for conduct, courage, and charity.

Though weapons and utensils were buried with the dead, or exposed on platforms, and though great men were left to sleep in their lodges, henceforth never to be entered by the living, there is no trace known to me of continued ancestor-worship. As many Blackfeet change their names yearly, ancestral names are not likely to become those of gods.

The Sun is by many believed to have taken the previous place of Nà-pi in religion; or perhaps Nà-pi *is* the Sun. However, he is still separately addressed in prayer. The Sun receives presents of furs and so forth; a finger, when the prayer is for life, has been offered to him. Fetishism probably shows itself in gifts to a great rock. There is daily prayer, both to the Sun and to Nà-pi. Women institute Medicine Lodges, praying, 'Pity me, Sun.

non-spirit has not arisen. So far, Nà-pi answers to Marrangarra, the Creative Being of the Larrakeah tribe of Australians. 'A very good Man called Marrangarra lives in the sky; he made all living creatures, except black fellows. He made everything. . . . He never dies, and likes all black fellows.' He has a demiurge, Dawed (Mr. Foelsche, *apud* Dr. Stirling, *J.A.L.*, Nov. 1894, p. 191). It is curious to observe how savage creeds often shift the responsibility for evil from the Supreme Creator, entirely beneficent, on to a subordinate deity.

You have seen my life. You know that I am pure.' 'We look on the Medicine Lodge woman as you white people do on the Roman Catholic Sisters.' Being 'virtuous in deed, serious, and clean-minded,' the Medical Lodge woman is in spiritual *rapprochement* with Nà-pi and the Sun. To this extent, at least, Blackfoot religion is an ethical influence.

The creed seems to be a nascent polytheism, subordinate to Nà-pi as supreme Maker, and to the personified Sun. As Blackfoot ghosts are 'vaporious, ineffectual' for good, there seems to be nothing like ancestor worship.

These two cults and beliefs, Pawnee and Blackfoot, may be regarded as fairly well authenticated examples of un-Christianised American religion among races on the borderland of agriculture and the chase. It would be difficult to maintain that ghost-worship or ancestor-worship is a potent factor in the evolution of the deathless Ti-ra-wá or the immortal Creator Nà-pi, who has nothing of the spirit about him, especially as ghosts are not worshipped.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now look at the Supreme Being of a civilised American people. There are few more interesting accounts of religion than Garcilasso de la Vega's description of faith in Peru. Garcilasso was of Inca parentage on the spindle side; he was born in 1540, and his book, taken from the traditions of an uncle, and aided by the fragmentary collections of Father Blas Valera, was published in 1609. In Garcilasso's theory the original people of Peru, Totemists and worshippers of hills and streams, Earth and Sea, were converted to Sun worship by the first Inca, a child of the Sun. Even the new religion included ancestor-worship and other superstitions. But behind Sun worship was the faith in a Being who 'advanced the Sun so far above all the stars of heaven.'<sup>2</sup> This Being was Pachacamac, 'the sustainer of the world.' The question then arises, Is Pachacamac a form of the same

<sup>1</sup> Grinnell's *Blackfoot Lodge-Tales* and *Pawnee Hero Stories*.

<sup>2</sup> Garcilasso, i. 101.

creative being whom we find among the lowest savages, or is he the result of philosophical reflection? The latter was the opinion of Garcilasso. 'The Incas and their Amautas' (learned class) 'were philosophers.'<sup>1</sup>

'Pacha,' he says, = universe, and 'cama' = soul. Pachacamac, then, is *Anima Mundi*. 'They did not even take the name of Pachacamac into their mouths,' or but seldom and reverently, as the Australians will not, in religious matters, mention Darumulun. Pachacamac had no temple, 'but they worshipped him in their hearts.' That he was the Creator appears in an earlier writer, cited by Garcilasso, Agustin de Zarate (ii. ch. 5). Garcilasso, after denying the existence of temples to Pachacamac, mentions one, but only one. He insists, at length, and with much logic, that He whom, as a Christian, he worships, is in Quichua styled Pachacamac. Moreover, the one temple to Pachacamac was not built by an Inca, but by a race which, having heard of the Inca god, borrowed his name, without understanding his nature, that of a Being who dwells not in temples made with hands (ii. 186). In the temple this people, the Yuncas, offered even human sacrifices. By the Incas to Pachacamac no sacrifice was offered (ii. 189). This negative custom they also imposed upon the Yuncas, and they removed idols from the Yunca temple of Pachacamac (ii. 190). Yunca superstitions, however, infested the temple, and a Voice gave oracles therein.<sup>2</sup> The Yuncas also had a talking idol, which the Inca, in accordance with a religious treaty, occasionally consulted.

While Pachacamac, without temple or rite, was reckoned the Creator, we must understand that Sun-worship and ancestor-worship were the practical elements of the Inca cult. This appears to have been distasteful to the Inca Huayna Ccapac, for at a Sun feast he gazed hard on the Sun, was remonstrated with by a priest, and replied

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* i. 106.

<sup>2</sup> From all this we might conjecture, like Mr. Prescott, that the Incas borrowed Pachacamac from the Yuncas, and etherealised his religion. But Mr. Clements Markham points out that 'Pachacamac is a pure Quichua word.'



that the restless Sun 'must have another Lord more powerful than himself.'<sup>1</sup>

This remark could not have been necessary if Pachacamac were really an article of living and universal belief. Perhaps we are to understand that this Inca, like his father, who seems to have been the original author of the saying, meant to sneer at the elaborate worship bestowed on the Sun, while Pachacamac was neglected, as far as ritual went.

In Garcilasso's book we have to allow for his desire to justify the creed of his maternal ancestors. His criticism of Spanish versions is acute, and he often appeals to his knowledge of Quichua, and to the direct traditions received by him from his uncle. Against his theory of Pachacamac as a result of philosophical thought, it may be urged that similar conceptions, or nearly similar, exist among races not civilised like the Incas, and not provided with colleges of learned priests. In fact, the position of Pachacamac and the Sun is very nearly that of the Blackfoot Creator Nà-pi, and the Sun, or of Shang-ti and the Heaven, in China. We have the Creative Being whose creed is invaded by that of a worshipped aspect of nature, and whose cult, quite logically, is *nil*, or nearly *nil*. There are also, in different strata of the Inca empire, ancestor-worship, or mummy-worship, Totemism and polytheism, with a vague mass of *huaca*=*Elohim*, *kalou*, *wakan*.

Perhaps it would not be too rash to conjecture that Pachacamac is not a merely philosophical abstraction, but a survival of a Being like Nà-pi or Ahone. Cieza de Leon calls Pachacamac 'a devil,' whose name means 'creator of the world'!<sup>2</sup> The name, when it *was* uttered, was spoken with genuflexions and signs of reverence. So closely did Pachacamac resemble the Christian Deity, that Cieza de Leon declares the devil to have forged and insisted on the resemblance!<sup>3</sup> It was open to Spanish missionaries to use Pachacamac, as to the Jesuits among

<sup>1</sup> Garcilasso, ii. 446, 447.

<sup>2</sup> Cieza de Leon, p. 253.

<sup>3</sup> Markham's translation, p. 253.

the Bantu to use Mpungu, as a fulcrum for the introduction of Christianity. They preferred to regard Pachacamac as a fraudulent fiend. Now Nzambi Mpungu, among the Bantu, is assuredly not a creation of a learned priesthood, for the Bantu have no learned priests, and Mpungu would be useless to the greedy conjurers whom they do consult, as he is not propitiated. On grounds of analogy, then, Pachacamac may be said to resemble a savage Supreme Being, somewhat etherealised either by Garcilasso or by the Amautas, the learned class among the subjects of the Incas. He does not seem, even so, much superior to the Ahone of the Virginians.

We possess, however, a different account of Inca religion, from which Garcilasso strongly dissents. The best version is that of Christoval de Molina, who was chaplain of the hospital for natives, and wrote between 1570 and 1584.<sup>1</sup> Christoval assembled a number of old priests and other natives who had taken part in the ancient services, and collected their evidence. He calls the Creator ('not born of woman, unchangeable and eternal') by the name Pachayachachi, 'Teacher of the world' and 'Tecsviracocha,' which Garcilasso dismisses as meaningless.<sup>2</sup> He also tells the tale of the Inca Yupanqui and the Lord of the Sun, but says that the Incas had already knowledge of the Creator. To Yupanqui he attributes the erection of a gold image of the Creator, utterly denied by Garcilasso.<sup>3</sup> Christoval declares, again contradicted by Garcilasso, that sacrifices were offered to the Creator. Unlike the Sun, Christoval says, the Creator had no woman assigned to him, 'because, as he created them, they all belonged to him' (p. 26), which, of course, is an idea that would also make sacrifice superfluous.

Christoval gives prayers in Quichua, wherein the Creator is addressed as *Uiracocha*.

Christoval assigns images, sacrifice, and even human sacrifice, to the Creator Uiracocha. Garcilasso denies that the Creator Pachacamac had any of these things,

<sup>1</sup> *Rites and Laws of the Incas*, Markham's translation, p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> *Rites*, p. 6. Garcilasso, i. 109.

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he denies that Uiracocha was the name of the Creator, and he denies it, knowing that the Spaniards made the assertion.<sup>1</sup> Who is right? Uiracocha, says Garcilasso, is one thing, with his sacrifices; the Creator, Pachacamac, without sacrifices, is another, is God.

Mr. Markham thinks that Garcilasso, writing when he did, and not consciously exaggerating, was yet less trustworthy (though 'wonderfully accurate') than Christoval. Garcilasso, however, is 'scrupulously truthful.'<sup>2</sup> 'The excellence of his memory is perhaps best shown in his topographical details. . . . He does not make a single mistake,' in the topography of three hundred and twenty places! A scrupulously truthful gentleman, endowed with an amazing memory, and a master of his native language, flatly contradicts the version of a Spanish priest, who also appears to have been careful and honourable.

I shall now show that Christoval and Garcilasso have different versions of the same historical events, and that Garcilasso bases his confutation of the Spanish theory of the Inca Creator on his form of this historical tradition, which follows:

The Inca Yahuarhuaccac, like George II., was at odds with his Prince of Wales. He therefore banished the Prince to Chita, and made him serve as shepherd of the llamas of the Sun. Three years later the disgraced Prince came to Court, with what the Inca regarded as a cock-and-bull story of an apparition of the kind technically styled 'Borderland.' Asleep or awake, he knew not, he saw a bearded robed man holding a strange animal. The appearance declared himself as Uiracocha (Christoval's name for the Creator), a Child of the Sun; by no means as Pachacamac, the Creator of the Sun. He announced a distant rebellion, and promised his aid to the Prince. The Inca, hearing this narrative, replied in the tones of Charles II., when he said about Monmouth, 'Tell James to go to hell!'<sup>3</sup> The predicted rebellion, however, broke out, the Inca fled, the Prince saved the city, dethroned

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Reports on Discovery of Peru*, Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> *Rites*, p. xv.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Ailesbury's *Memoirs*.

the Bantu to use Mpungu, as a fulcrum for the introduction of Christianity. They preferred to regard Pachacamac as a fraudulent fiend. Now Nzambi Mpungu, among the Bantu, is assuredly not a creation of a learned priesthood, for the Bantu have no learned priests, and Mpungu would be useless to the greedy conjurers whom they do consult, as he is not propitiated. On grounds of analogy, then, Pachacamac may be said to resemble a savage Supreme Being, somewhat etherealised either by Garcilasso or by the Amautas, the learned class among the subjects of the Incas. He does not seem, even so, much superior to the Ahone of the Virginians.

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Mr. Markham thinks that Garcilasso, writing when he did, and not consciously exaggerating, was yet less trustworthy (though 'wonderfully accurate') than Christoval. Garcilasso, however, is 'scrupulously truthful.'<sup>2</sup> 'The excellence of his memory is perhaps best shown in his topographical details. . . . He does not make a single mistake,' in the topography of three hundred and twenty places! A scrupulously truthful gentleman, endowed with an amazing memory, and a master of his native language, flatly contradicts the version of a Spanish priest, who also appears to have been careful and honourable.

I shall now show that Christoval and Garcilasso have different versions of the same historical events, and that Garcilasso bases his confutation of the Spanish theory of the Inca Creator on his form of this historical tradition, which follows:

The Inca Yahuarhuaccac, like George II., was at odds with his Prince of Wales. He therefore banished the Prince to Chita, and made him serve as shepherd of the llamas of the Sun. Three years later the disgraced Prince came to Court, with what the Inca regarded as a cock-and-bull story of an apparition of the kind technically styled 'Borderland.' Asleep or awake, he knew not, he saw a bearded robed man holding a strange animal. The appearance declared himself as Uiracocha (Christoval's name for the Creator), a Child of the Sun; by no means as Pachacamac, the Creator of the Sun. He announced a distant rebellion, and promised his aid to the Prince. The Inca, hearing this narrative, replied in the tones of Charles II., when he said about Monmouth, 'Tell James to go to hell!'<sup>3</sup> The predicted rebellion, however, broke out, the Inca fled, the Prince saved the city, dethroned

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Reports on Discovery of Peru*, Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> *Rites*, p. xv.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Ailesbury's *Memoirs*.

his father, and sent him into the country. He then adopted, from the apparition, the throne-name *Uiracocha*, grew a beard, and dressed like the apparition, to whom he erected a temple, roofless, and unique in construction. Therein he had an image of the god, for which he himself gave frequent sittings. When the Spaniards arrived, bearded men, the Indians called them *Uiracochas* (as all the Spanish historians say), and, to flatter them, declared falsely that *Uiracocha* was their word for the Creator. Garcilasso explodes the Spanish etymology of the name, in the language of Cuzco, which he 'sucked in with his mother's milk.' 'The Indians said that the chief Spaniards were children of the Sun, to make gods of them, just as they said they were children of the apparition, *Uiracocha*.'<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Garcilasso and Cieza de Leon agree in their descriptions of the image of *Uiracocha*, which, both assert, the Spaniards conceived to represent a Christian early missionary, perhaps St. Bartholomew.<sup>2</sup> Garcilasso had seen the mummy of the Inca *Uiracocha*, and relates the whole tale from the oral version of his uncle, adding many native comments on the Court revolution described.

To Garcilasso, then, the invocations of *Uiracocha*, in Christoval's collection of prayers, are a native adaptation to Spanish prejudice: even in them *Pachacamac* occurs.<sup>3</sup>

Now, Christoval has got hold of a variant of Garcilasso's narrative, which, in Garcilasso, has plenty of humour and human nature. According to Christoval it was not the Prince, later Inca *Uiracocha*, who beheld the apparition, but the Inca *Uiracocha's son*, Prince of Wales, as it were, of the period, later the Inca *Yupanqui*.

Garcilasso corrects Christoval. *Uiracocha* saw the apparition, as Père Acosta rightly says, and *Yupanqui* was *not* the son but the grandson of this Inca *Uiracocha*.<sup>4</sup> *Uiracocha's* own son was *Pachacutec*, which simply means 'Revolution,' 'they say, by way of by-word *Pachamcutin*, which means "the world changes."'

Christoval's form of the story is peculiarly gratifying

<sup>1</sup> Garcilasso, ii. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Rites*, pp. 28, 29.

<sup>3</sup> Cieza de Leon, p. 357.

<sup>4</sup> Acosta, lib. vi. ch. 21; Garcilasso, ii. 88, 89.

in one way. Yupanqui saw the apparition *in a piece of crystal*, 'the apparition vanished, while the piece of crystal remained. The Inca took care of it, and they say that he afterwards saw everything he wanted in it.' The apparition, in human form and in Inca dress, gave itself out for the Sun; and Yupanqui, when he came to the throne, 'ordered a statue of the Sun to be made, as nearly as possible resembling the figure he had seen in the crystal.' He bade his subjects to 'reverence the new deity, as they had heretofore worshipped the Creator,'<sup>1</sup> who, therefore, was prior to Uiracocha.

Interesting as a proof of Inca crystal-gazing, this legend of Christoval's cannot compete as evidence with Acosta and Garcilasso. The reader, however, must decide as to whether he prefers Garcilasso's unpropitiated Pachacamac, or Christoval's Uiracocha, human sacrifices, and all.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Tylor prefers the version of Christoval, making Pachacamac a title of Uiracocha.<sup>3</sup> He thinks that we have, in Inca religion, an example of 'a subordinate god' (the Sun) 'usurping the place of the supreme deity,' 'the rivalry between the Creator and the divine Sun.' In China, as we shall see, Mr. Tylor thinks, on the other hand, that Heaven is the elder god, and that Shang-ti, the Supreme Being, is the usurper.

The truth in the Uiracocha *versus* Pachacamac controversy is difficult to ascertain. I confess a leaning toward Garcilasso, so truthful and so wonderfully accurate, rather than to the Spanish priest. Christoval, it will be remarked, says that 'Chanca-Uiracocha was a *huaca* (sacred place) in Chuqui-chaca.'<sup>4</sup> Now Chuqui-chaca is the very place where, according to Garcilasso, the Inca Uiracocha erected a temple to 'his Uncle, the Apparition.'<sup>5</sup> Uiracocha, then, the deity who receives human sacrifice, would be a late, royally introduced ancestral god, no real rival of the Creator, who receives no sacrifice at all, and, as he was bearded, his name would be easily transferred to the bearded Spaniards, whose arrival the Inca Uiracocha

<sup>1</sup> *Rites*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> *Prim. Cult.* ii. 337, 338.

<sup>4</sup> *Rites*, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Garcilasso, ii. 69.

was said to have predicted. But to call several or all Spaniards by the name given to the Creator would be absurd. Mr. Tylor and Mr. Markham do not refer to the passage in which Christoval obviously gets hold of a wrong version of the story of the apparition.

There is yet another version of this historical legend, written forty years after Christoval's date by Don Juan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti-yamqui Salcamayhua. He ranks after Garcilasso and Christoval, but before earlier *Spanish* writers, such as Acosta, who knew not Quichua. According to Salcamayhua, the Inca Uiracocha was like James III., fond of architecture and averse to war. He gave the realm to his bastard, Urca, who was defeated and killed by the Chancas. Uiracocha meant to abandon the contest, but his legitimate son, Yupanqui, saw a fair youth on a rock, who promised him success in the name of the Creator, and then vanished. The Prince was victorious, and the Inca Uiracocha retired into private life. This appears to be a mixture of the stories of Garcilasso and Christoval.<sup>1</sup>

It is not, in itself, a point of much importance whether the Creator was called Uiracocha (which, if it means anything, means 'sea of grease!'), or whether he was called Pachacamac, maker of the world, or by both names. The important question is as to whether the Creator received even human sacrifices (Christoval) or none at all (Garcilasso). As to Pachacamac, we must consult Mr. Payne, who has the advantage of being a Quichua scholar. He considers that Pachacamac combines the conception of a general spirit of living things with that of a Creator or maker of all things. 'Pachacamac and the Creator are one and the same,' but the conception of Pachayachac, 'ruler of the world,' 'belongs to the later period of the Incas.'<sup>2</sup> Mr. Payne appears to prefer Christoval's legend of the Inca crystal-gazer, to the rival version of Garcilasso. The Yunca form of the worship of Pachacamac Mr. Payne regards as an example of de-

<sup>1</sup> *Rites and Laws*, p. 91 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Payne, i. 459.



gradation.<sup>1</sup> He disbelieves Garcilasso's statement that human sacrifices were not made to the Sun. Garcilasso must, if Mr. Payne is right, have been a deliberate liar, unless, indeed, he was deceived by his Inca kinsfolk. The reader can now estimate for himself the difficulty of knowing much about Peruvian religion, or, indeed, of any religion. For, if Mr. Payne is right about the lowest savages having no conception of God, or even of spirit, though the idea of a great Creator, a spirit, is one of the earliest efforts of 'primitive logic,' we, of course, have been merely fabling throughout.

Garcilasso's evidence, however, seems untainted by Christian attempts to find a primitive divine tradition. Garcilasso may possibly be refining on facts, but he asks for no theory of divine primitive tradition in the case of Pachacamac, whom he attributes to philosophical reflection.

In the following chapter we discuss 'the old Degeneration theory,' and contrast it with the scheme provisionally offered in this book. We have already observed that the Degeneration theory biasses the accounts of some missionaries who are obviously anxious to find traces of a Primitive Tradition, originally revealed to all men, but only preserved in a pure form by the Jews. To avoid deception by means of this bias we have chosen examples of savage creative beings from wide areas, from diverse ages, from non-missionary statements, from the least contaminated backward peoples, and from their secret mysteries and hymns.

Thus, still confining ourselves to the American continent, we have the ancient hymns of the Zufis, in no way Christianised, and never chanted in the presence of the Mexican Spanish. These hymns run thus: 'Before the beginning of the New Making, Awonawilona, the Maker and container of All, the All-Father, solely had being.' He then evolved all things 'by thinking himself outward in space.' Hegelian! but so are the dateless

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* i. 463. Mr. Payne absolutely rejects Ixtlilochitl's story of the monotheism of Nezahualcoyotl; 'Torquemada knows nothing of it,' i. 490.

hymns of the Maoris, despite the savage mythology which intrudes into both sets of traditions. The old fable of Ouranos and Gaia recurs in Zuni as in Maori.<sup>1</sup>

I fail to see how Awonawilona could be developed out of the ghost of chief or conjurer. That in which all things potentially existed, yet who was more than all, is not the ghost of a conjurer or chief. He certainly is not due to missionary influence. No authority can be better than that of traditional sacred chants found among a populace which will not sing them before one of their Mexican masters.

We have tried to escape from the bias of belief in a primitive divine tradition, but bias of every kind exists, and must exist. At present the anthropological hypothesis of ancestor-worship as the basis, perhaps (as in Mr. Spencer's theory) the only basis of religion, affects observers. Before treating the theory of Degeneration let us examine a case of the anthropological bias. The Fijians, as we learned from Williams, have ancestral gods, and also a singular form of the creative being, Ndengei, or, as Mr. Basil Thomson calls him, Degei. Mr. Thomson writes: 'It is clear that the Fijians humanised their gods, because they had once existed on earth in human form. . . . Like other primitive people, the Fijians deified their ancestors.' Yet the Fijians 'may have forgotten the names of their ancestors three generations back'! How in the world can you deify a person whom you don't remember? Moreover, only malevolent chiefs were deified, so apparently a Fijian god is really a well-born human scoundrel, so considerable that *he* for one is not forgotten—just as if we worshipped the wicked Lord Lyttelton! Of course a god like Ahone could not be made out of such materials as these, and, in fact, we learn from Mr. Thomson that there are other Fijian gods of a different origin.

'It is probable that there were here and there, *gods that were the creation of the priests that ministered to them,*

<sup>1</sup> Cushing, *Report, Ethnol. Bureau*, 1891-92, p. 379.

*and were not the spirits of dead chiefs.* Such was the god of the Bure Tribe on the Ra coast, who was called Tui Laga or "Lord of Heaven." When the missionaries first went to convert this town they found the heathen priest their staunch ally. He declared that they had come to preach the same god that he had been preaching, the Tui Laga, and that more had been revealed to them than to him of the mysteries of the god.'

Mr. Thomson is reminded of St. Paul at Athens, 'whom then ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.'

Mr. Thomson has clearly no bias in favour of a God like our own, known to savages, and *not* derived from ghost-worship. He deduces this god, Tui Laga, from priestly reflection and speculation. But we find such a God where we find no priests, where a priesthood has not been developed. Such a God, being usually unpropitiated by sacrifice and lucrative private practice, is precisely the kind of deity who does not suit a priesthood. For these reasons—that a priesthood 'sees no money in' a God of this kind, and that Gods of this kind, ethical and creative, are found where there are no priesthoods—we cannot look on the conception as a late one of priestly origin, as Mr. Thomson does, though a learned caste, like the Peruvian Amautas, may refine on the idea. Least of all can such a God be 'the creation of the priests that minister to him,' when, as in Peru, the Andaman Isles, and much of Africa, this God is ministered to by no priests. Nor, lastly, can we regard the absence of sacrifice to the Creative Being as a mere proof that he is an ancestral ghost who 'had lived on earth at too remote a time;' for this absence of sacrifice occurs where ghosts are dreaded, but are not propitiated by offerings of food (as among Australians, Andamanese, and Blackfoot Indians), while the Creative Being is not and never was a ghost, according to his worshippers.

At this point criticism may naturally remark that

whether the savage Supreme Being is fêted, as by the Comanches, who offer puffs of smoke: or is apparently half forgotten, as by the Algonquins and Zulus: whether he is propitiated by sacrifice (which is very rare indeed), or only by conduct, I equally claim him as the probable descendant in evolution of the primitive, undifferentiated, not necessarily 'spiritual' Being of such creeds as the Australian.

One must reply that this pedigree cannot, indeed, be historically traced, but that it presents none of the logical difficulties inherent in the animistic pedigree—namely, that the savage Supreme Being is the last and highest result of evolution on animistic lines out of ghosts. It does not run counter to the evidence universally offered by savages, that their Supreme Being never was mortal man. It is consistent, whereas the animistic hypothesis is, in this case, inconsistent, with the universal savage theory of Death. Finally, as has been said before, granting my opinion that there are two streams of religious thought, one rising in the conception of an undifferentiated Being, eternal, moral, and creative, the other rising in the ghost-doctrine, it stands to reason that the latter, as best adapted to everyday needs and experiences, normal and supernormal, may contaminate the former, and introduce sacrifice and food-propitiation into the ritual of Beings who, by the original conception, 'need nothing of ours.' At the same time, the conception of 'spirit,' once attained, would inevitably come to be attached to the idea of the Supreme Being, even though he was not at first conceived of as a spirit. We know, by our own experience, how difficult it has become for us to think of an eternal, powerful, and immortal being, except as a spirit. Yet this way of looking at the Supreme Being, merely as *being*, not as spirit, must have existed, granting that the idea of spirit has ghost for its first expression, as, by their very definition, the high gods of savages are not ghosts, and never were ghosts, but are prior to death.

Here let me introduce, by way of example, a Supreme Being *not* of the lowest savage level. Metaphysically he

is improved on in statement, morally he is stained with the worst crimes of the hungry ghost-god, or god framed on the lines of animism. This very interesting Supreme Being, in a middle barbaric race, is the Polynesian Taa-roa, as described by Ellis in that fascinating book 'Polynesian Researches.' 'Several of their *taata-paari*, or wise men, pretend that, according to other traditions, Taa-roa was only a man who was deified after death.' Euhemerism, in fact, is a natural theory of men acquainted with ancestor-worship, but a Euhemeristic hypothesis by a Polynesian thinker is not a statement of national belief. Taa-roa was 'uncreated, existing from the beginning, or from the time he emerges from the *po*, or world of darkness.' In the Leeward Isles Taa-roa was *Toivi*, fatherless and motherless from all eternity. In the highest heavens he dwells alone. He created the gods of polytheism, the gods of war, of peace, and so on. Says a native hymn, 'He was: he abode in the void. No earth, *no sky*, no men! He became the universe.' In the Windward Isles he has a wife, Papa the rock=Papa, Earth, wife of Rangi, Heaven, in Maori mythology. Thus it may be argued, Taa-roa is no 'primæval theistic idea,' but merely the Heaven-God (Ouranos in Greece). But we may distinguish: in the Zuñi hymn we have the myth of the marriage of Heaven and Earth, but Heaven is not the Eternal, Awonawilona, who 'thought himself out into the void,' before which, as in the Polynesian hymn, 'there was no sky.'<sup>2</sup>

Whence came the idea of Taa-roa? The Euhemeristic theory that he was a ghost of a dead man is absurd. But as we are now among polytheists it may be argued that, given a crowd of gods on the animistic model, an origin had to be found for them, and that origin was Taa-roa. This would be more plausible if we did not find Supreme Beings where there is no departmental polytheism to develop them out of. In Tahiti, *Atuas* are gods, *Oramutuas tiis* are spirits; the chief of the spirits were ghosts of warriors. These were mischievous; they, their images,

<sup>1</sup> ii. 191, 1829.

<sup>2</sup> *Prim. Cult.* ii. 345, 346. Ellis, ii. 193.

and the skulls of the dead needed propitiation, and these ideas (perhaps) were reflected on to Taa-roa, to whom human victims were sacrificed.<sup>1</sup>

Now this kind of horror, human sacrifice, is unknown, I think, in early savage religions of Supreme Beings, as in Australia, among the Bushmen, the Andamanese, and so on. I therefore suggest that in an advanced polytheism, such as that of Polynesia, the evil sacrificial rites unpractised by low savages come to be attached to the worship even of the Supreme Being. Ghosts and ghost-gods demanded food, and food was therefore also offered to the Supreme Being.

It was found difficult, or impossible, to induce Christian converts, in Polynesia, to repeat the old prayers. They began, trembled, and abstained. They had a ritual 'for almost every act of their lives,' a thing unfamiliar to low savages. In fact, beyond all doubt, religious criminal acts, from human sacrifice to the burning of Jeanne d'Arc, increase as religion and culture move away from the stage of Bushmen and Andamanese to the stage of Aztec and Polynesian culture. The Supreme Being is succeeded in advancing civilisation, and under the influences of animism, by ruthless and insatiable ghost-gods, full of the worst human qualities. Thus there is what we may really call degeneration, moral and religious, inevitably accompanying early progress.

That this is the case, that the first advances in culture *necessarily* introduce religious degeneration, we shall now try to demonstrate. But we may observe, in passing, that our array of moral or august savage supreme beings (the first who came to hand) will, for some reason, not be found in anthropological treatises on the Origin of Religion. They appear, somehow, to have been overlooked by philosophers. Yet the evidence for them is sufficiently good. Its excellence is proved by its very uniformity, assuredly undesigned. An old, nay, an obsolete theory—that of degeneration in religion—has facts at its basis, which its very supporters have ignored,

<sup>1</sup> Ellis, ii. 221.

which orthodoxy has overlooked. Thus the Rev. Professor Flint informs the audience in the Cathedral of St. Giles's, that, in the religions 'at the bottom of the religious scale,' 'it is always easy to see how wretchedly the divine is conceived of; how little conscious of his own true wants . . . is the poor worshipper.' The poor worshipper of Baïame wishes to obey His Law, which makes, to some extent, for righteousness.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Faiths of the World*, p. 413.

## XV

## THE OLD DEGENERATION THEORY

IF any partisan of the anthropological theory has read so far into this argument, he will often have murmured to himself, 'The old degeneration theory!' On this Dr. Brinton remarked in 1868:

'The supposition that in ancient times and in very unenlightened conditions, before mythology had grown, a monotheism prevailed which afterwards, at various times, was revived by reformers, is a belief that should have passed away when the delights of savage life and the praises of a state of nature ceased to be the theme of philosophers.'<sup>1</sup>

'The old degeneration theory' practically, and fallaciously, resolved itself, as Mr. Tylor says, into two assumptions—'first, that the history of culture began with the appearance on earth of a semi-civilised race of men; and second, that from this stage culture has proceeded in two ways—backward to produce savages, and forward to produce civilised men.'<sup>2</sup> That hypothesis is false to all our knowledge of evolution.

The hypothesis here provisionally advocated makes no assumptions at all. It is a positive fact that among some of the lowest savages there exists, not a doctrinal and abstract Monotheism, but a belief in a moral, powerful, kindly, creative Being, while this faith is found in juxtaposition with belief in unworshipped ghosts, totems,

<sup>1</sup> *Myths of the New World*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Prim. Cult.* i. 35.



fetishes, and so on. The powerful creative Being of savage belief sanctions truth, unselfishness, loyalty, chastity, and other virtues. I have set forth the difficulties involved in the attempt to derive this Being from ghosts and other lower forms of belief.

Now, it is mere matter of fact, and not of assumption, that the Supreme Being of many rather higher savages differs from the Supreme Being of certain lower savages by the neglect in which he is left, by the epicurean repose with which he is credited, and by his comparative lack of moral control over human conduct. In his place a mob of ghosts and spirits, supposed to be potent and helpful in everyday life, attract men's regard and adoration, and get paid by sacrifice—even by human sacrifice.

Turning to races yet higher in material culture, we find a crowd of hungry and cruel gods.

On this point Mr. Jevons remarks, in accordance with my own observation, that 'human sacrifice appears at a much earlier period in the rites for the dead than it does in the ritual of the gods.'<sup>1</sup> The dead chief needs servants and wives in Hades, who are offered to him. The Australians have some elements of cannibalism, but do not, as a general rule, offer any human victims. So far, then, ancestor-worship introduced a sadly 'degenerate' rite, compared with the moral faith in unfed gods.

To gods the human sacrifice was probably extended (in some cases) either by a cannibal civilised race, like the Aztecs, or by way of *piacula*, the god being conciliated for man's sin by the offering of what man most prized, the 'jealousy' of the god being appeased in a similar way. But these are relatively advanced conceptions, not to be found, to my knowledge, among the lowest and most backward races. Therefore, advance to the idea of spirit at one point, meant degeneration at another point, to the extent of human sacrifice.

Thus, on looking at relatively advanced races, we find them worshipping polytheistic deities and ghosts of the kings just dead, who are often propitiated by terrible

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction*, p. 199; also p. 161.

massacres of human victims, while, as in the case of Taa-roa, the blood spurts back even on the uncreated Creator, who was before earth was, or sea, sun, or sky. Undeniably the hungry, cruel gods are degenerate from the Australian Father in Heaven, who receives no sacrifice but that of men's lusts and selfishness; who desires obedience, not the fat of kangaroos; who needs nothing of ours; is unfed and unbribed. Thus, in this particular respect the degeneration of religion from the Australian or Andamanese to the Dinka standard—and infinitely more to the Polynesian, or Aztec, or popular Greek standard—is as undeniable as any fact in human history.

Anthropology has only escaped the knowledge of this circumstance by laying down the rule, demonstrably unbased on facts, that 'the divine sanction of ethical laws . . . belongs almost or wholly to religions above the savage level, not to the earlier and lower creeds;' that 'savage Animism is almost devoid of that ethical element which to the educated modern mind is the very main-spring of practical religion.'<sup>1</sup>

I have argued, indeed, that the God of low savages who imparts the divine sanction of ethical laws is *not* of animistic origin. But even where Mr. Im Thurn finds, in Guiana, nothing but Animism of the lowest conceivable type, he also finds in that Animism the only or most potent moral restraint on the conduct of men.

While Anthropology holds the certainly erroneous idea that the religion of the most backward races is always non-moral, of course she cannot know that there has, in fact, been great degeneration in religion (if religion began on the Australian and Andamanese level, or even higher) wherever religion is non-moral or immoral.

Again, Anthropology, while fixing her gaze on totems, on worshipped mummies, adored ghosts, and treasured fetishes, has not, to my knowledge, made a comparative study of the higher and purer religious ideas of savages. These have been passed by, with a word about credulous missionaries and Christian influences, except in the

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* ii. 360, 361.

brief summary for which Mr. Tylor found room. In this work I only take a handful of cases of the higher religious opinions of savages, and set them side by side for purposes of comparison. Much more remains to be done in this field. But the area covered is wide, the evidence is the best attainable, and it seems proved beyond doubt that savages have 'felt after' a conception of a Creator much higher than that for which they commonly get credit. Now, if that conception is original, or is very early (and nothing in it suggests lateness of development), then the other elements of their faith and practice are degenerate.

'How,' it has been asked, 'could all mankind forget a pure religion?'<sup>1</sup> That is what I now try to explain. That degeneration I would account for by the attractions which animism, when once developed, possessed for the naughty natural man, 'the old Adam.' A moral creator in need of no gifts, and opposed to lust and mischief, will not help a man with love-spells, or with malevolent 'sendings' of disease by witchcraft; will not favour one man above his neighbour, or one tribe above its rivals, as a reward for sacrifice which he does not accept, or as constrained by charms which do not touch his omnipotence. Ghosts and ghost-gods, on the other hand, in need of food and blood, afraid of spells and binding charms,<sup>2</sup> are a corrupt, but, to man, a useful constituency. Man being what he is, man was certain to 'go a whoring' after practically useful ghosts, ghost-gods, and fetishes which he could keep in his wallet or medicine bag. For these he was sure, in the long run, first to neglect his idea of his Creator; next, perhaps, to reckon Him as only one, if the highest, of the venal rabble of spirits or deities, and to sacrifice to Him, as to them. And this is exactly what happened! If we are not to call it 'degeneration,' what are we to call it? It may be an old theory, but facts 'winna ding,' and are on the side of an old theory. Meanwhile, on the material plane, culture\*

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Menzies, *History of Religion*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> λεγόμεναι θεῶν ἀνέγκαι. Porphyry.

kept advancing, the crafts and arts arose; departments arose, each needing a god; thought grew clearer; such admirable ethics as those of the Aztecs were developed, and while bleeding human hearts smoked on every altar, Nezahuatl conceived and erected a bloodless fane to 'The Unknown God, Cause of Causes,' without altar or idol; and the Inca, Yupanqui, or another, declared that 'Our Father and Master, the Sun, must have a Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

But, at this stage of culture, the luck of the state, and the interests of a rich and powerful clergy, were involved in the maintenance of the old, animistic, relatively non-moral system, as in Cuzco, Greece, and Rome. That popular and political regard for the luck of the state, that priestly self-interest (quite natural), could only be swept away by the moral monotheism of Christianity or of Islam. Nothing else could do it. In the case of Christianity, the central and most potent of many combined influences, apart from the Life and Death of Our Lord, was the moral Monotheism of the Hebrew religion of Jehovah.

Now, it is undeniable that Jehovah, at a certain period of Hebrew history, had become degraded and anthropomorphised, far below Darumulun, and Puluga, and Pachacamac, and Ahone, as conceived of in their purest form, and in the high mood of savage mysteries which yet contain so much that is grotesque. Even the Big Black Man of the Fuegians is on a higher level (as *we* reckon morals), when he forbids the slaying of a robber enemy, than certain examples of early Hebrew conduct. But our knowledge of the Fuegians is lamentably scanty.

Again, traces of human sacrifice appear in the ritual of Israel, and it is only relatively late that the great prophets, justly declaring Jehovah to be indifferent to the blood of bulls and rams, try to bring back his service to that of the unpropitiated, unbought Dendid, or Ahone, or Pundjel. Here is degeneration, even in Israel. How the conception of Jehovah arose in Israel, whether it was a revival of a half-obliterated idea, such as we find

<sup>1</sup> Ixtlilochitl. Balboa, *Hist. du Pérou*, p. 62.

among low savages; or whether it was borrowed from some foreign creed; or was the result of meditation on the philosophical Supreme Being of high Egyptian theology, is another question. The Biblical statement leans to the first alternative. Jehovah, not by that name, had been the God of Israel's fathers. The question will be discussed later; but, unless new facts are discovered, we must accept the version of the Pentateuch, or take refuge in conjecture.

Not only is there degeneration from the Australian conception of Mungan-gnaur, at its best, to the conception of the Semitic gods in general, but, 'humanly speaking,' if religion began in a pure form among low savages, degeneration was inevitable. Advancing social conditions compelled men into degeneration. Mungan-ngaur is, so far, in line with our own ideas of divinity because he is not localised. He dwelleth not in temples made with hands; it is not likely that he should, when his worshippers have neither house, tent, nor tabernacle. As Mr. Robertson Smith says, 'where the God had a house or a temple, we recognise the work of men who were no longer pure nomads, but had begun to form fixed homes.' By the nature of Australian society, a deity could not be tied to a temple, and temple-ritual, and consequent myths to explain that ritual, could not arise. Nor could Darumulun be attached to a district, just as 'the nomad Arabs could not assimilate the conception of a god as a land-owner, and apply it to their own tribal deities, for the simple reason that in the desert private property in land was unknown.'<sup>1</sup>

Darumulun is thus not capable of degenerating into 'a local god, as *Baal*, or lord of the land,' because this 'involves a series of ideas unknown to the primitive life of the savage huntsman,' like the widely spread Murring tribes.<sup>2</sup>

Nor could Darumulun be tied down to a place in Semitic fashion, first by manifesting himself there, there-

<sup>1</sup> Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 104, 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 106.

fore by receiving an altar of sacrifice there, and in the end a sanctuary, for Darumulun receives no sacrifice at all.

Again, the scene of the Bora could not become a permanent home of Darumulun, because, when the rites are over, the effigy of the god is scrupulously destroyed. Thus Darumulun, in his own abode 'beyond the sky,' can 'go everywhere and do everything' (is omnipresent and omnipotent), dwells in no earthly places, has no temple, nor tabernacle, nor sacred mount, nor, like Jehovah, any limit of land.<sup>1</sup>

The early Hebrew conception of Jehovah, then, is infinitely more conditioned, practically, by space, than the Supreme Being, 'The Master,' in the conception of some Australian blacks.

'By a prophet like Isaiah the residence of Jehovah in Zion is almost wholly dematerialised. . . . Conceiving Jehovah as the King of Israel, he necessarily conceives His kingly activity as going forth from the capital of the nation.'<sup>2</sup>

But nomad hunter tribes, with no ancestor-worship, no king and no capital, cannot lower their deity by the conditions, or limit him by the limitations, of an earthly monarchy.

In precisely the same way, Major Ellis proves the degeneration of deity in Africa, so far as being localised in place of being the Universal God, implies degeneration, as it certainly does to our minds. By being attached to a given hill or river 'the gods, instead of being regarded as being interested in the whole of mankind, would eventually come to be regarded as being interested in separate tribes or nations alone.'

To us Milton seems nobly Chauvinistic when he talks of what God has done by 'His English.' But this localised and essentially degenerate conception was inevitable,

<sup>1</sup> On the Glenelg some caves and mountain tops are haunted or holy. Waitz, vi. 804. No authority cited.

<sup>2</sup> *Religion of Semites*, p. 110.

as soon as, in advancing civilisation, the god who had been 'interested in the whole of [known] mankind' was settled on a hill, river, or lagoon, amidst a nation of worshippers.

In the course of the education of mankind, this form of degeneration (abstractly so considered) was to work, as nothing else could have worked, towards the lofty conception of universal Deity. For that conception was only brought into practical religion (as apart from philosophic speculation) by the union between Israel and the God of Sinai and Zion. The Prophets, recognising in the God of Sinai, their nation's God—One to whom righteousness was infinitely dearer than even his Chosen People—freed the conception of God from local ties, and made it over-spread the world.

Mr. Robertson Smith has pointed out, again, the manner in which the different political development of East and West affected the religion of Greece and of the Semites. In Greece, monarchy fell, at an early period, before the aristocratic houses. The result was 'a divine aristocracy of many gods, only modified by a weak reminiscence of the old kingship in the not very effective sovereignty' (or *prytany*) 'of Zeus. In the East the national god tended to acquire a really monarchic sway.'<sup>1</sup> Australia escaped polytheistic degeneracy by having no aristocracy, as in Polynesia, where aristocracy, as in early Greece, had developed polytheism. Ghosts and spirits the Australians knew, but not polytheistic gods, nor departmental deities, as of war, agriculture, art. The savage had no agriculture, and his social condition was not departmental. In yet another way, political advance produces religious degeneration, if polytheism be degeneration from the conception of one relatively supreme moral being. To make a nation, several tribes must unite. Each has its god, and the nation is apt to receive them all, equally, into its Pantheon. Thus, if worshippers of Baiame, Pundjel, and Darumulun coalesced into a nation, we might find all three gods living together in a new polytheism. In fact, granting a relatively pure starting-

<sup>1</sup> *Rel. Sem.* p. 74.

point, degeneration from it *must* accompany every step of civilisation, to a certain distance.

Unlike Semitic gods, Darumulun receives no sacrifice. As we have said, he has no kin with ghosts, and their sacrifices could not be carried on into his cult, if Waitz-Gerland (vi. 811) are right in saying that the Australians have no ancestor-worship. The Kurnai ghosts 'were believed to live upon plants,'<sup>1</sup> which are not offered to them. Chill ghosts, unfed by men, would come to waning camp-fires and batten on the broken meats. The Ngarego and Wolgal held, more handsomely, that Tharamulun (Darumulun) met the just departed spirit 'and conducted it to its future home beyond the sky.'<sup>2</sup> Ghosts might also accompany relics of the body, such as the dead hand, carried about by the family, who would wave the black fragment at the dreaded Aurora Borealis, crying, 'Send it away!' I am unacquainted with any sacrifices to ancestral ghosts among this people who cannot long remember their ancestors, consequently the practice has not been refracted on their supreme Master's cult. In the cult of Darumulun, and of other highest gods of lowest savages, nothing answers to the Hebrew technical priestly word for sacrifice, 'food of the deity.'<sup>3</sup> Nobody feeds Puluga, nobody fed Ahone. We hear of no Fuegian sacrifices. Mr. Robertson Smith says: 'In all religions in which the gods have been developed out of totems [worshipped animals and other things regarded as akin to human stocks] the ritual act of laying food before the deity is perfectly intelligible.' Pundjel, an Australian Supreme Being, is mixed up with animals in some myths, but it is not easy to see how such Supreme Beings as he could be 'developed out of totems'! I am not aware, again, that any Australian tribe *feeds* the animals who are its totems, so Darumulun could not, and did not inherit sacrifice through them. Mr. Robertson Smith had a celebrated theory that cereal sacrifice is a tribute to a god, while sacrifice of a beast or man is an act of

<sup>1</sup> Howitt, *J.A.I.* 1884, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> *Rel. Sem.* p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 188.



communion with the god.<sup>1</sup> Men and gods dined together.<sup>2</sup> 'The god himself was conceived of as a being of the same stock as his comrades.' Beasts were also of the same stock, one beast, say a lobster, was of the same blood as a lobster kin, and its god.<sup>3</sup> Occasionally the sacred beast of the kin, usually not to be slain or tasted, is 'eaten as a kind of mystic sacrament a most dubious fact.'<sup>4</sup>

Now, there is, I believe, some evidence, lately collected if not published, which makes in favour of the eating of totems by Australians, at a certain very rare and solemn mystery. It would not even surprise me ('from information received') if a very deeply initiated person were occasionally slain, as the highest degree of initiation, on certain most unusual occasions. This remains uncertain, but I have at present no evidence that, either by one road or another, either from ghost-feeding or totem-feeding, or feeding on totems, any Australian Supreme Being receives any sacrifice at all. Much less, as among Pawnees and Semitic peoples (to judge from certain traces), is the Australian Supreme Being a cause of and partaker in human sacrifice.<sup>5</sup> The horrible idea of the Man who is the God, and is eaten in the God's honour, occurs among polytheistic Aztecs, on a high level of material culture, not among Australians, Andamanese, Bushmen, or Fuegians.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, in religion, the Darumulun, or other Supreme Being of the lowest known savages, men roaming wild, when originally met, on a continent peopled by older kinds of animals than ours, was (as we regard purity) on a higher plane by far than the gods of Greeks and Semites in their earliest known myths. Setting mythology aside and looking only at cult, the God of the Murring or the Kurnai, whose precepts soften the heart, who knows the heart's secrets, who inculcates chastity, respect of age, unselfishness, who is not bound

<sup>1</sup> *Rel. Sem.* p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 269.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 277.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 343. Citing Gen. xxii., 2 Kings xxi. 6, Micah vi. 7, 2 Kings iii. 27.

<sup>6</sup> I mean, does not occur to my knowledge. New evidence is always upsetting anthropological theories.

by conditions of space or place, who receives no blood of slaughtered man or beast, is a conception from which the ordinary polytheistic gods of infinitely more polite peoples are frankly degenerate. The animistic superstitions wildly based on the belief in the soul have not soiled him, and the social conditions of aristocracy, agriculture, architecture, have not made him one in a polytheistic crowd of rapacious gods, nor fettered him as a Baal to his estate, nor localised him in a temple built with hands. He cannot appear as a 'God of Battles;' no *Te Deum* can be sung to him for victory in a cause perhaps unjust, for he is the Supreme Being of a certain group of allied local tribes. One of these tribes has no more interest with him than another, and the whole group do not, as a body, wage war on another alien group. The social conditions of his worshippers, then, preserve Darumulun from the patent blots on the scutcheon of gods among much more advanced races.

Once more, the idea of Animism admits of endless expansion. A spirit can be located anywhere, in any stone, stick, bush, person, hill, or river. A god made on the animistic model can be assigned to any department of human activity, down to sports, or lusts, or the province of Cloacina. Thus religion becomes a mere haunted and pestilential jungle of beliefs. But the theistic conception, when not yet envisaged as spiritual, cannot be subdivided and *éparpillé*. Thus, from every point of view, and on every side, Animism is full of the seeds of religious degeneration, which do not and cannot exist in what I take to be the earliest known form of the theistic conception: that of a Being about whose metaphysical nature—spirit or not spirit—no questions were asked, as Dr. Brinton long ago remarked.

That conception alone could neither supply the moral motive of 'a soul to be saved,' nor satisfy the metaphysical instinct of advancing mankind. To meet these wants, to supply 'soul,' with its moral stimulus, and to provide a phrase or idea under which the Deity could be envisaged (*i.e.* as a *spirit*) by advancing thought,

Animism was necessary. The blending of the theistic and the animistic beliefs was indispensable to religion. But, in the process of animistic development under advancing social conditions, degeneration was necessarily implied. Degeneration of the theistic conception for a while, therefore, occurred. The facts are the proofs; and only contradictory facts, in sufficient quantity, can annihilate the old theory of Degeneration when it is presented in this form.

It must be repeated that on this theory an explanation is given of what the old Degeneration hypothesis does not explain. Granting a primal religion relatively pure in its beginnings, why did it degenerate?

Mr. Max Müller, looking on religion as the development of the sentiment of the Infinite, regards fetishism as a secondary and comparatively late form of belief. We find it, he observes, in various forms of Christianity; Christianity, therefore, is primary there, relic worship is secondary. Religion beginning, according to him, in the sense of the infinite, as awakened in man by tall trees, high hills, and so on, it advances to the infinite of space and sky, and so to the infinitely divine. This is primary: fetishism is secondary. Arguing elsewhere against this idea, I have asked: What was the *modus* of degeneration which produced similar results in Christianity, and in African and other religions? How did it work? I am not aware that Mr. Max Müller has answered this question. But how degeneration worked—namely, by Animism supplanting Theism—is conspicuously plain on our theory.

Take the early chapters of Genesis, or any savage cosmogonic myth you please. Deathless man is face to face with the Creator. He cannot degenerate in religion. He cannot offer sacrifice, for the Creator obviously needs nothing, and again, as there is no death, he cannot slay animals for the Creator. But, in one way or another, usually by breach of a taboo, Death enters the world. Then comes, by process of evolution, belief in hungry spirits, belief in spirits who may inhabit stones or sticks; again there arise priests who know how to propitiate spirits

and how to tempt them into sticks and stones. These arts become lucrative and are backed by the cleverest men, and by the apparent evidence of prophecies by convulsionaries. Thus every known kind of degeneration in religion is inevitably introduced as a result of the theory of Animism. We do not need an hypothesis of Original Sin as a cause of degeneration, and, if Mr. Max Müller's doctrine of the Infinite were *viable*, we have supplied, in Animism, under advancing social conditions, what he does not seem to provide, a cause and *modus* of degeneration. Fetishism would thus be really 'secondary,' *ex hypothesi*, but as we nowhere find Fetishism alone, without the other elements of religion, we cannot say, historically, whether it is secondary or not. Fetishism logically needs, in some of its aspects, the doctrine of spirits, and Theism, in what we take to be its earliest known form, does not logically need the doctrine of spirits as given matter. So far we can go, but not farther, as to the fact of priority in evolution. Nevertheless we meet, among the most backward peoples known to us, among men just emerged from the palæolithic stage of culture, men who are involved in dread of ghosts, a religious Idea which certainly is not born of ghost-worship, for by these men, ancestral ghosts are not worshipped.

In their hearts, on their lips, in their moral training we find (however blended with barbarous absurdities, and obscured by rites of another origin) the faith in a Being who created or constructed the world; who was from time beyond memory or conjecture; who is primal, who makes for righteousness, and who loves mankind. This Being has not the notes of degeneration; his home is 'among the stars,' not in a hill or in a house. To him no altar smokes, and for him no blood is shed.

'God, that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing . . . and hath made of one blood all nations of men . . .

that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us : for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.'

That the words of St. Paul are literally true, as to the feeling after a God who needs not anything at man's hands, the study of anthropology seems to us to demonstrate. That in this God 'we have our being,' in so far as somewhat of ours may escape, at moments, from the bonds of Time and the manacles of Space, the earlier part of this treatise is intended to suggest, as a thing by no means necessarily beyond a reasonable man's power to conceive. That these two beliefs, however attained (a point on which we possess no positive evidence), have commonly been subject to degeneration in the religions of the world, is only too obvious.

So far, then, the nature of things and of the reasoning faculty does not seem to give the lie to the old Degeneration theory.

To these conclusions, as far as they are matters of scientific opinion, we have been led by nothing but the study of anthropology.

## XVI

*THEORIES OF JEHOVAH*

ALL speculation on the early history of religion is apt to end in the endeavour to see how far the conclusions can be made to illustrate the faith of Israel. Thus, the theorist who believes in ancestor-worship as the key of all the creeds will see in Jehovah a developed ancestral ghost, or a kind of fetish-god, attached to a stone—perhaps an ancient sepulchral stele of some desert sheikh. The exclusive admirer of the hypothesis of Totemism will find evidence for his belief in worship of the golden calf and the bulls. The partisan of nature-worship will insist on Jehovah's connection with storm, thunder, and the fire of Sinai. On the other hand, whoever accepts our suggestions will incline to see, in the early forms of belief in Jehovah, a shape of the widely diffused conception of a Moral Supreme Being, at first (or, at least, when our information begins) envisaged in anthropomorphic form, but gradually purged of all local traits by the unexampled and unique inspiration of the great Prophets. They, as far as our knowledge extends, were strangely indifferent to the animistic element in religion, to the doctrine of surviving human souls, and so, of course, to that element of Animism which is priceless—the purification of the soul in the light of the hope of eternal life. Just as the hunger after righteousness of the Prophets is intense, so their hope of finally sating that hunger in an eternity of sinless bliss and enjoyment of God is confessedly inconspicuous. In short, they have carried Theism to its

austere extreme—' though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him '—while unconcerned about the rewards of Animism. This is certainly a strange result of a religion which, according to the anthropological theory, has Animism for its basis.

We therefore examine certain forms of the animistic hypothesis as applied to account for the religion of Israel. The topic is one in which special knowledge of Hebrew and other Oriental languages seems absolutely indispensable; but anthropological speculators have not been Oriental scholars (with rare exceptions), while some Oriental scholars have borrowed from popular anthropology without much critical discrimination. These circumstances must be our excuse for venturing on to this difficult ground.

It is probably impossible for us to trace with accuracy the rise of the religion of Jehovah. 'The wise and learned' dispute endlessly over dates of documents, over the amount of later doctrine interpolated into the earlier texts, over the nature, source, and quantity of foreign influence—Chaldean, Accadian, Egyptian, or Assyrian. We know that Israel had, in an early age, the conception of the moral Eternal; we know that, at an early age, that conception was contaminated and anthropomorphised; and we know that it was rescued, in a great degree, from this corruption, while always retaining its original ethical aspect and sanction. Why matters went thus in Israel and not elsewhere we know not, except that such was the will of God in the mysterious education of the world. How mysterious that education has been is best known to all who have studied the political and social results of Totemism. On the face of it a perfectly crazy and degrading belief—on the face of it meant for nothing but to make the family a hell of internecine hatred—Totemism rendered possible—nay, inevitable—the union of hostile groups into large and relatively peaceful tribal societies. Given the materials as we know them, we never should have educated the world thus; and we do not see why it should thus have been done. But we are

very anthropomorphic, and totally ignorant of the conditions of the problem.

An example of anthropological theory concerning Jehovah was put forth by Mr. Huxley.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Huxley's general idea of religion as it is on the lowest known level of material culture—through which the ancestors of Israel must have passed like other people—has already been criticised. He denied to the most backward races both cult and religious sanction of ethics. He was demonstrably, though unconsciously, in error as to the facts, and therefore could not start from the idea that Israel, in the lowest historically known condition of savagery, possessed, or, like other races, might possess, the belief in an Eternal making for righteousness. 'For my part,' he says, 'I see no reason to doubt that, like the rest of the world, the Israelites had passed through a period of mere ghost-worship, and had advanced through ancestor-worship and Fetishism and Totemism to the theological level at which we find them in the Books of Judges and Samuel.'<sup>2</sup>

But why does he think the Israelites did all this? The Hebrew ghosts, abiding, according to Mr. Huxley, in a rather torpid condition in Sheol, would not be of much practical use to a worshipper. A reference in Deuteronomy xxvi. 14 (Deuteronomy being, *ex hypothesi*, a late pious imposture) does not prove much. The Hebrew is there bidden to remind himself of the stay of his ancestors in Egypt, and to say, 'Of the hallowed things I have not given aught for the dead'—namely, of the tithes dedicated to the Levites and the poor. A race which abode for centuries among the Egyptians, as Israel did—among a people who elaborately fed the *kas* of the departed—might pick up a trace of a custom, the giving of food for the dead, still persevered in by St. Monica till St. Ambrose admonished her. But Mr. Huxley is hard put to it for evidence of ancestor-worship or ghost-worship in Israel when he looks for indications of these rites in 'the singular weight attached to the veneration of parents in the Fourth

<sup>1</sup> *Science and Hebrew Tradition.*

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 361.



Commandment.'<sup>1</sup> The *Fourth* Commandment, of course, is a slip of the pen. He adds: 'The Fifth Commandment, as it stands, would be an excellent compromise between ancestor-worship and Monotheism.' Long may children practise this excellent compromise! It is really too far-fetched to reason thus: 'People were bidden to honour their parents, as a compromise between Monotheism and ghost-worship.' Hard, hard bestead is he who has to reason in that fashion! This comes of 'training in the use of the weapons of precision of science.'

Mr. Huxley goes on: 'The Ark of the Covenant may have been a relic of ancestor-worship;' 'there is a good deal to be said for that speculation.' Possibly there is, by way of the valuable hypothesis that Jehovah was a fetish stone which had been a grave-stone, or perhaps a *lingam*, and was kept in the Ark on the plausible pretext that it was the two Tables of the Law!

However, Mr. Huxley really finds it safer to suppose that references to ancestor-worship in the Bible were obliterated by late monotheistic editors, who, none the less, are so full and minute in their descriptions of the various heresies into which Israel was eternally lapsing, and must not be allowed to lapse again. Had ancestor-worship been a *péché mignon* of Israel, the Prophets would have let Israel hear their mind on it.

The Hebrews' indifference to the departed soul is, in fact, a puzzle, especially when we consider their Egyptian education—so important an element in Mr. Huxley's theory.

Mr. Herbert Spencer is not more successful than Mr. Huxley in finding ancestor-worship among the Hebrews. On the whole subject he writes:

'Where the levels of mental nature and social progress are lowest, we usually find, along with an absence of religious ideas generally, an absence, or very slight development, of ancestor-worship. . . . Cook [Captain Cook], telling us what the Fuegians were before contact

<sup>1</sup> *Science and Hebrew Tradition*, p. 308.

with Europeans had introduced foreign ideas, said there were no appearances of religion among them; and we are not told by him or others that they were ancestor-worshippers.<sup>1</sup>

Probably they are not; but they do possess a Being who reads their hearts, and who certainly shows no traces of European ideas. If the Fuegians are not ancestor-worshippers, this Being was not developed out of ancestor-worship.

The evidence of Captain Cook, no anthropologist, but a mariner who saw and knew little of the Fuegians, is precisely of the sort against which Major Ellis warns us.<sup>2</sup> The more a religion consists in fear of a moral guardian of conduct, the less does it show itself, by sacrifice or rite, to the eyes of Captain Cook, of his Majesty's ship *Endeavour*. Mr. Spencer places the Andamanese on the same level as the Fuegians, 'so far as the scanty evidence may be trusted.' We have shown that (as known to Mr. Spencer in 1876) it may not be trusted at all; the Andamanese possessing a moral Supreme Being, though they are not, apparently, ancestor-worshippers. The Australians 'show us not much persistence in ghost-propitiation,' which, if it exists, ceases when the corpses are tied up and buried, or after they are burned, or after the bones, carried about for a while, are exposed on platforms. Yet many Australian tribes possess a moral Supreme Being.

In fact ghost-worship, in Mr. Spencer's scheme, cannot be fairly well developed till society reaches the level of 'settled groups whose burial-places are in their midst.' Hence the development of a moral Supreme Being among tribes *not* thus settled, is inconceivable, on Mr. Spencer's hypothesis.<sup>3</sup> By that hypothesis, 'wor-

<sup>1</sup> *Prin. Soc.* p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> *The Tshi-speaking Races*, p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> Some Australian tribes have cemeteries, and I have found one native witness, King Billy, to the celebration of the mysteries near one of these burying-places. I have not discovered other evidence to this effect, though I have looked for it. The spot selected is usually 'near the camp,' and the place for so large a camp is chosen, naturally, where the supply of food is adequate.

shipped ancestors, according to their remoteness, were regarded as divine, semi-divine, and human.'<sup>1</sup> Where we find, then, the Divine Being among nomads who do not remember their great-grandfathers, the Spencerian theory is refuted by facts. We have the effect, the Divine Being, without the cause, worship of ancestors.

Coming to the Hebrews, Mr. Spencer argues that 'the silence of their legends (as to ancestor-worship) is but a negative fact, which may be as misleading as negative facts usually are.' They are, indeed; witness Mr. Spencer's own silence about savage Supreme Beings. But we may fairly argue that if Israel had been given to ancestor-worship (as might partly be surmised from the mystery about the grave of Moses) the Prophets would not have spared them for their crying. The Prophets were unusually outspoken men, and, as they undeniably do scold Israel for every other kind of conceivable heresy, they were not likely to be silent about ancestor-worship, if ancestor-worship existed. Mr. Spencer, then, rather heedlessly, though correctly, argues that 'nomadic habits are unfavourable to evolution of the ghost-theory.'<sup>2</sup> Alas, this gives away the whole case! For, if all men began as nomads, and nomadic habits are unfavourable even to the ordinary ghost, how did the Australian and other nomads develop the Supreme Being, who, *ex hypothesi*, is the final fruit of the ghost-flower? If you cannot have 'an established ancestor-worship' till you abandon nomadic habits, how, while still nomadic, do you evolve a Supreme Being? Obviously not out of ancestor-worship.

Mr. Spencer then assigns, as evidence for ancestor-worship in Israel, mourning dresses, fasting, the law against self-bleeding and cutting off the hair for the dead, and the text (Deut. xxvi. 14) about 'I have not given aught thereof for the dead.' 'Hence, the conclusion must be that ancestor-worship had developed as far as nomadic habits allowed, before it was repressed by a higher worship.'<sup>3</sup> But whence came that higher worship

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Aryans, *Principles of Sociology*, p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> *Principles*, p. 316.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 317.

which seems to have intervened immediately after the cessation of nomadic habits?

There are obvious traces of grief expressed in a primitive way among the Hebrews. 'Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead' (Deut. xiv. 1). 'Neither shall men lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them; neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead' (by way of counter-irritant to grief); 'neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or their mother,' because the Jews were to be removed from their homes.<sup>1</sup> 'Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you.'<sup>2</sup>

It may be usual to regard inflictions, such as cutting, by mourners, as sacrifices to the ghost of the dead. But one has seen a man strike himself a heavy blow on receiving news of a loss *not* by death, and I venture to fancy that cuttings and gashings at funerals are merely a more violent form of appeal to a counter-irritant of grief, and, again, a token of recklessness caused by a sorrow which makes void the world. One of John Nicholson's native adorers killed himself on news of that warrior's death, saying, 'What is left worth living for?' This was not a sacrifice to the Manes of Nicholson. The sacrifice of the mourner's hair, as by Achilles, argues a similar indifference to personal charm. Once more, the text in Psalm cvi. 28, 'They joined themselves unto Baal-Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead,' is usually taken by commentators as a reference to the ritual of gods who are no gods. But it rather seems to indicate an acquiescence in foreign burial rites. All this additional evidence does not do much to prove ancestor-worship in Israel, though the secrecy of the burial of Moses, 'in a valley of the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre to this day,' may indicate a dread of a nascent worship of the great leader.<sup>3</sup> The scene of the defection in

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah xvi. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Leviticus xix. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy xxxiv. 6.

Psalm cvi., Beth-peor, is indicated in Numbers xxv., where Israel runs after the girls and the gods of Moab: 'And Moab called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor.' Psalm cvi. is obviously a later restatement of this addiction to the Moabite gods, and the Psalm adds 'they ate the sacrifices of the dead.'

It is plain that, for whatever reason, ancestor-worship among the Hebrews was, at the utmost, rudimentary. Otherwise it must have been clearly denounced by the Prophets among the other heresies of Israel. Therefore, as being at the most rudimentary, ancestor-worship in Israel could not be developed at once into the worship of Jehovah.

Though ancestor-worship among the Hebrews could not be fully developed, according to Mr. Spencer, because of their nomadic habits, it *was* fully developed, according to the Rev. A. W. Oxford. 'Every family, like every old Roman and Greek family, was firmly held together by the worship of its ancestors, the hearth was the altar, the head of the family the priest. . . . The bond which kept together the families of a tribe was its common religion, the worship of its reputed ancestor. The chief of the tribe was, of course, the priest of the cult.' Of course; but what a pity that Mr. Huxley and Mr. Spencer omitted facts so invaluable to their theory! And how does the Rev. Mr. Oxford know? Well, 'there is no direct proof,' oddly enough, of so marked a feature in Hebrew religion but we are referred to 1 Sam. xx. 29 and Judges xviii. 19. 1 Sam. xx. 29 makes Jonathan say that David wants to go to a family sacrifice, that is, a family dinner party. This hardly covers the large assertions made by Mr. Oxford. His second citation is so unlucky as to contradict his observation that 'of course' the chief of the tribe was the priest of the cult. Micah, in Judges xvii., xviii., is *not* the chief of his tribe (Ephraim), neither is he even the priest in his own house. He 'consecrated one of his own sons who became his priest,' till he got hold of

a casual young Levite, and said, 'Be unto me a *father* and a priest,' for ten shekels *per annum*, a suit of clothes, and board and lodging.

In place, then, of any remote reference to a chief's being priest of his ancestral ghosts, we have here a man of one tribe who is paid rather handsomely to be family chaplain to a member of another tribe. Some moss-troopers of the tribe of Dan then kidnapped this valuable young Levite, and seized a few idols which Micah had permitted himself to make. And all this, according to our clerical authority, is evidence for ancestor-worship!<sup>1</sup>

All this appears to be derived from some incoherent speculations of Stade. For example, that learned German cites the story of Micah as a proof that the different tribes or clans had different religions. This *must* be so, because the Danites asked the young Levite whether it was not better to be priest to a clan than to an individual? It is as if a patron offered a rich living to somebody's private chaplain, saying that the new position was more creditable and lucrative. This would hardly prove a difference of religion between the individual and the parish.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Oxford next avers that 'the earliest form of the Israelite religion was Fetishism or Totemism.' This is another example of Stade's logic. Finding, as he believes, names suggestive of Totemism in Simeon, Levi, Rachel, and so on, Stade leaps to the conclusion that Totemism in Israel was prior to anything resembling monotheism. For monotheism, he argues, could not give the germs of the clan or tribal organisation, while Totemism could do so. Certainly it could, but as, in many regions (America, Australia), we find Totemism and the belief in a benevolent Supreme Being co-existing among savages, when first observed by Europeans, we cannot possibly say dogmatically whether a rough monotheism or whether Totemism came first in order of evolution. This holds as good of

<sup>1</sup> *Short Introduction to History of Ancient Israel*, pp. 83, 84.

<sup>2</sup> Stade i 403.

Israel (if once totemistic) as it does of Pawnees or Kurnai. Stade has overlooked these well-known facts, and his opinion filters into a cheap hand-book, and is set in examinations!<sup>1</sup>

We also learn from Mr. Oxford's popular manual of German Biblical conjecture that 'Jehovah was not represented as a loving Father, but as a Being easily roused to wrath,' a thing most incident to loving fathers.

Again, Mr. Oxford avers that 'the old Israelites knew no distinction between physical and moral evil. . . . The conception of Jehovah's holiness had nothing moral in it' (p. 90). This rather contradicts Wellhausen: 'In all ancient primitive peoples . . . religion furnishes a motive for law and morals; in the case of none did it become so with such purity and power as in that of the Israelites.'<sup>2</sup>

We began by examining Mr. Huxley's endeavours to find traces of ancestor-worship (in his opinion the origin of Jehovah-worship) among the Israelites. We next criticised Mr. Spencer's efforts in the same quest, and the more dogmatic assertions of Mr. Oxford and Stade. We now return to Mr. Huxley's account of the evolution from ghost-cult to the cult of Jehovah.

From the history of the Witch of Endor, which Mr. Huxley sees no reason to regard as other than a sincere statement of what really occurred, he gathers that the Witch cried out, 'I see Elohim.' These Elohim proved to be the phantasm of the dead Samuel. Moved by this hallucination the Witch uttered a veridical premonition, totally adverse to her own interests, and uncommonly dangerous to her life. This is, psychically, interesting. The point, however, is that *Elohim* is a term equivalent to Red Indian *Wakan*, Fijian *Kalou*, Maori or Melanesian *Mana*, meaning the 'supernatural,' the vaguely powerful—in fact X.

<sup>1</sup> Stade, i. 406.

<sup>2</sup> Wellhausen, *History of Israel*, p. 437. Mr. Oxford's book is only noticed here because it is meant for a popular manual. As Mr. Henry Foker says, 'it seems a pity that the clergy should interfere in these matters.'

This particular example of *Elohim* was a phantasm of the dead, but *Elohim* is also used of the highest Divine Being, therefore the highest Divine Being is of the same genus as a ghost—so Mr. Huxley reasons. ‘The difference which was supposed to exist between the different *Elohim* was one of degree, not of kind.’<sup>1</sup>

‘If Jehovah was thus supposed to differ only in degree from the undoubtedly zoomorphic or anthropomorphic “gods of the nations,” why is it to be assumed that he also was not thought to have a human shape?’ He *was* thought to have a human shape, at one time, by some theorists: no doubt exists on that head. That, however, is not where we demur. We demur when, because an hallucination of the Witch of Endor (probably still incompletely developed) is called by her *Elohim*, therefore the highest *Elohim* is said by Mr. Huxley to differ from a ghost only in degree, not in kind. *Elohim*, or *El*, the creative, differs from a ghost *in kind*, because he, in Hebrew belief, never was a ghost, he is immortal and without beginning.

Mr. Huxley now enforces his theory by a parallel between the religion of Tonga and the religion of Israel under the Judges. He quotes Mariner,<sup>2</sup> whose statement avers that there is a supreme Tongan being: ‘of his origin they had no idea, rather supposing him to be eternal. His name is Tá-li-y-Tooboo=“Wait-there-Tooboo.”’ ‘He is a great chief from the top of the sky down to the bottom of the earth.’ He, and other ‘*original* gods’ of his making, are carefully and absolutely discriminated from the *atua*, which are ‘the human soul after its separation from the body.’ All Tongan gods are *atua* (*Elohim*), but all *atua* are not ‘original gods,’ unserved by priests, and unpropitiated by food or libation, like the highest God, Tá-li-y-Tooboo, the Eternal of Tonga. ‘He occasionally inspires the How’ (elective King), but often a How is not inspired at all by Tá-li-y-Tooboo, any more than Saul, at last, was inspired by Jehovah.

<sup>1</sup> *Science and Hebrew Tradition*, p. 299.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 127.



Surely there is a difference in kind between an eternal, immortal God, and a ghost, though both are *atua*, or both are *Elohim*—the unknown X.

Many people call a ghost 'supernatural;' they also call God 'supernatural,' but the difference between a phantasm of a dead man and the Deity they would admit, I conceive, to be a difference of kind. We have shown, or tried to show, that the conceptions of 'ghost' and 'Supreme Being' are different, not only in kind, but in origin. The ghost comes from, and depends on, the animistic theory; the Supreme Being, as originally thought of, does not. All Gods are *Elohim*, *kalou*, *wakan*; all *Elohim*, *kalou*, *wakan* are not Gods.

A ghost-god should receive food or libation. Mr. Huxley says that Tá-li-y-Tooboo did so. 'If the god, like Tá-li-y-Tooboo, had no priest, then the chief place was left vacant, and was supposed to be occupied by the god himself. *When the first cup of Kava was filled*, the mataboole who acted as master of the ceremonies said, "Give it to your god," and it was offered, though only as a matter of form.'<sup>1</sup>

This is incorrect. In the case of Tá-li-y-Tooboo '*there is no cup filled for the god.*'<sup>2</sup> '*Before any cup is filled* the man by the side of the bowl says: "The Kava is in the cup"' (which it is not), 'and the mataboole answers, "Give it to your god;"' but the Kava is *not* in the cup, and the Tongan Eternal receives no oblation.

The sacrifice, says Mr. Huxley, meant 'that the god was either a deified ghost, or, at any rate, a being of like nature to these.'<sup>3</sup> But as Tá-li-y-Tooboo had no sacrifice, contrary to Mr. Huxley's averment, he was *not* 'a deified ghost, or a being of like nature to these.' To the lower, non-ghostly Tongan gods the animistic habit of sacrifice had been extended, but not yet to the Supreme Being.

Ah, if Mr. Gladstone, or the Duke of Argyll, or some bishop had made a misstatement of this kind, how Mr.

<sup>1</sup> *Science and Hebrew Tradition*, p. 331.

<sup>2</sup> *Mariner*, ii. 205.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 325.

Huxley would have crushed him ! But it is a mere error of careless reading, such as we all make daily.

It is manifest that we cannot prove Jehovah to be a ghost by the parallel of a Tongan god, who, by ritual and by definition, was *not* a ghost. The proof therefore rests on the anthropomorphised pre-prophetic accounts, and on the ritual, of Jehovah. But man naturally 'anthropises' his deities : he does not thereby demonstrate that they were once ghosts.

As regards the sacrifices to Jehovah, the sweet savour which he was supposed to enjoy (contrary to the opinion of the Prophets), these sacrifices afford the best presumption that Jehovah was a ghost-god, or a god constructed on ghostly lines.

But we have shown that among the lowest races neither are ghosts worshipped by sacrifice, nor does the Supreme Being, Darumulun or Puluga, receive food offerings. We have also instanced many Supreme Beings of more advanced races, Ahone, and Dendid, and Nyan-kupon, who do not sniff the savour of any offerings. If then (as in the case of Taa-roa), a Supreme Being *does* receive sacrifice, we may argue that a piece of animistic ritual, not connected with the Supreme Being in Australia or Andaman, not connected with his creed in Virginia or Africa (where ghost-gods do receive sacrifice), may in other regions be transferred from ghost-gods to the Supreme Being, who never was a ghost. There seems to be nothing incredible or illogical in the theory of such transference.

On a God who never was a ghost men may come to confer sacrifices (which are not made to Baiame and the rest) because, being in the habit of thus propitiating one set of bodiless powers, men may not think it civil or safe to leave another set of powers out. By his very nature, man must clothe all gods with some human passions and attributes, unless, like a large number of savages, he leaves his high God severely alone, and is the slave of fetishes and spectres. But that practice makes against the ghost-theory.

In the attempt to account thus, namely by transference, for the sacrifices to Jehovah, we are met by a difficulty of our own making. If the Israelites did not sacrifice to ancestors (as we have shown that there is very scant reason for supposing that they did), how could they transfer to Jehovah the rite which, by our hypothesis, they are not proved to have offered to ancestors?

This is certainly a hard problem, harder (or perhaps easier), because we know so very little of the early history of the Hebrews. According to their own traditions, Israel had been in touch with all manner of races much more advanced than themselves in material culture, and steeped in highly developed polytheistic Animism. According to their history, the Israelites 'went a-whoring' incorrigibly after strange gods. It is impossible, perhaps, to disentangle the foreign and the native elements.

It may therefore be tentatively suggested that early Israel had its Ahone in a Being perhaps not yet named Jehovah. Israel entertained, however, perhaps by reason of 'nomadic habits,' only the scantiest concern about ancestral ghosts. We then find an historical tradition of secular contact between Israel and Egypt, from which Israel emerges with Jehovah for God, and a system of sacrifices. Regarding Jehovah as a revived memory of the moral Supreme Being whom Israel must have known in extremely remote ages (unless Israel was less favoured than Australians, Bushmen, or Andamanese), we might look on the sacrifices to him as an adaptation from the practices of religion among races more settled than Israel, and more civilised.<sup>1</sup>

Speculation on subjects so remote must be conjectural, but our suggestion would, perhaps, account for sacrifices to Jehovah, paid by a race which, by reason of 'nomadic habits,' was never much given to ancestor-worship, but

<sup>1</sup> Of course, it is understood that Israel (in the dark backward and abysm of time) may also have been totemistic, like the Australians, as texts pointed out by Mr. Robertson Smith seem to hint. There was also worship of teraphim, respect paid to stones and trees, and so forth.

had been in contact with great sacrificing, polytheistic civilisations. Mr. Huxley, however, while he seems to slur the essential distinction between ghost-gods and the Eternal, grants, later, that 'there are very few people(s?) without additional gods, which cannot, with certainty, be accounted for as deified ancestors.' Tá-li-y-Tooboo, of course, is one of these gods, as is Jehovah. Mr. Huxley gives no theory of *how* these gods came into belief, except the suggestion that 'the polytheistic theology has become modified by the selection of the cosmic or tribal god, as the only god to whom worship is due on the part of that nation,' without prejudice to the right of other nations to worship other gods.<sup>1</sup> This is 'monolatry,' and 'the ethical code, often of a very high order, comes into closer relation with the theological creed,' *why*, we are not informed. Nor do we learn out of what polytheistic deities Jehovah was selected, nor for what reason. The hypothesis, as usual, breaks down on the close relation between the ethical code and the theological creed, among low savages, with a relatively Supreme Being, but without ancestor-worship, and without polytheistic gods from whom to select a heavenly chief.

Whence came the moral element in the idea of Jehovah? Mr. Huxley supposes that, during their residence in the land of Goshen (and *a fortiori* before it), the Israelites 'knew nothing of Jehovah.'<sup>2</sup> They were polytheistic idolators. This follows, apparently, from Ezekiel xx. 5: 'In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, *and made myself known unto them* in the land of Egypt.' The Biblical account is that the God of Moses's fathers, the God of Abraham, enlightened Moses in Sinai, giving his name as 'I am that I am' (Exodus iii. 6, 14; translation uncertain). We are to understand that Moses, a religious reformer, revived an old, and, in the Egyptian bondage, a half-obliterated creed of the ancient nomadic Beni-Israel. They were no longer to 'defile themselves with the idols of Egypt,' as they had obviously done. We

<sup>1</sup> *Science and Hebrew Tradition*, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> p. 351.

really know no more about the matter. Wellhausen says that Jehovah was 'originally a family or tribal god, either of the family of Moses or of the tribe of Joseph.' How a family could develop a Supreme Being all to itself, we are not informed, and we know of no such analogous case in the ethnographic field. Again, Jehovah was 'only a special name of El, current within a powerful circle.' And who was El?<sup>1</sup> 'Moses was not the first discoverer of the faith.' Probably not, but Mr. Huxley seems to think that he was.

Wellhausen's and other German ideas filter into popular traditions, as we saw, through 'A Short Introduction to the History of Ancient Israel' (pp. 19, 20), by the Rev. A. W. Oxford, M.A., Vicar of St. Luke's, Soho. Here follows Mr. Oxford's undeniably 'short way with Jehovah.' 'Moses was the founder of the Israelite religion. Jehovah, his family or tribal god, perhaps originally the God of the Kenites, was taken as a tribal god by all the Israelite tribes . . . That Jehovah was not the original God of Israel' (as the Bible impudently alleges) 'but was the god of the Kenites, we see mainly from Deut. xxxiii. 2, Judges v. 4, 5, and from the history of Jethro, who, according to Judges i. 16, was a Kenite.'

The first text says that, according to Moses, 'the Lord came from Sinai,' rose up from Seir, and shone from Mount Paran. The second text mentions Jehovah's going up out of Seir and Sinai. The third text says that Jethro, Moses's Kenite (or Midianite) father-in-law, dwelt among the people of Judah; Jethro being a priest of Midian. How all this proves that 'Moses was a great impostor,' as the poet says, and that Jehovah was *not* 'the original God of Israel,' but (1) Moses's family or tribal god, or (2) 'the god of the Kenites,' I profess my inability to comprehend.

Wellhausen himself had explained Jehovah as 'a family or tribal god, either of the family of Moses' (tribe of Levi) 'or of the tribe of Joseph.' It seems to be all one to Mr. Oxford whether Jehovah was a god of Moses's

<sup>1</sup> *History of Israel*, p. 443 note.

tribe or quite the reverse, 'a Kenite god.' Yet it really makes a good deal of difference! For in a complex of tribes, speaking one language, it is to the last degree unexampled (within my knowledge) that one tribe, or family, possesses, all to itself, a family god who is also the Creator and is later accepted as such by all the other tribes. One may ask for instances of such a thing in any known race, in any stage of culture. Peru will not help us—not the Creator, Pachacamac, but the Sun, is the god of the Inca family. If, on the other hand, Jehovah was a Kenite god, the Kenites were a half-Arab Semitic people connected with Israel, and may very well have retained traditions of a Supreme Being which, in Egypt, were likely to be dimmed, as Exodus asserts, by foreign religions. The learned Stade, to be sure, may disbelieve in Israel's sojourn in Egypt, but that revolutionary opinion is not necessarily binding on us and involves a few difficulties.

Have critics and manual-makers no knowledge of the science of comparative religion? Are they unaware that peoples infinitely more backward than Israel was at the date supposed have already moral Supreme Beings acknowledged over vast tracts of territory? Have they a tittle of positive evidence that early Israel was benighted beyond the darkness of Bushmen, Andamanese, Pawnees, Blackfeet, Hurons, Indians of British Guiana, Dinkas, Negroes, and so forth? Unless Israel had this rare ill-luck (which Israel denies) of course Israel must have had a secular tradition, however dim, of a Supreme Being. We must ask for a single instance of a family or tribe, in a complex of semi-barbaric but not savage tribes of one speech, owning a private deity who happened to be the Maker and Ruler of the world, and, as such, was accepted by all the tribes. Jehovah came out from Sinai, because, there having been a Theophany at Sinai, that mountain was regarded as one of his seats.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that it seemed to make no difference to Mr. Oxford whether Jehovah was a god of Moses's family

<sup>1</sup> *Religion of Semites.*

or tribe or a Kenite god. The former (with the alternative of *Joseph's* family or tribal god) is Wellhausen's theory. The latter is Stade's.<sup>1</sup> Each is inconsistent with the other; Wellhausen's fancy is inconsistent with all that we know of religious development: Stade's is hopelessly inconsistent with Exodus iv. 24-26, where Moses's Kenite wife reproaches him for a ceremony of his, not of her, religion. Therefore the Kenite differed from the Hebrew *sacra*.

The passage is very extraordinary, and is said by critics to be very archaic. After the revelation of the Burning Bush, Jehovah met Moses and his Kenite wife, Zipporah, and their child, at a khan. Jehovah was anxious to slay Moses, nobody ever knew why, so Zipporah appeased Jehovah's wrath by circumcising her boy *with a flint*. 'A bloody husband art thou to me,' she said, 'because of the circumcision'—an Egyptian, but clearly not a Kenite practice. Whatever all this may mean, it does not look as if Zipporah expected such rites as circumcision in the faith of a Kenite husband, nor does it favour the idea that the *sacra* of Moses were of Kenite origin.

Without being a scholar, or an expert in Biblical criticism, one may protest against the presentation to the manual-reading intellectual middle classes of a theory so vague, contradictory, and (by all analogy) so impossible as Mr. Oxford collects from German writers. Of course, the whole subject, so dogmatically handled, is mere matter of dissentient opinion among scholars. Thus M. Renan derives the name of Jehovah from Assyria, from 'Aramaised Chaldaeanism.'<sup>2</sup> In that case the name was long anterior to the residence in Egypt. But again, perhaps Jehovah was a local god of Sinai, or a provincial deity in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> He was known to very ancient sages, who preferred such names as El Shaddai and Elohim. In short, we have no certainty on the subject.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, i. 130.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire du Peuple d'Israël*, citing Schrader, p. 28.      <sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> See Professor Robertson's *Early Religion of Israel* for a list of these

I need hardly say, perhaps, that I have no antiquated prejudice against Biblical criticism. Assuredly the Bible must be studied like any other collection of documents, linguistically, historically, and in the light of the comparative method. The leading ideas of Wellhausen, for example, are conspicuous for acumen: the humblest layman can see that. But one may protest against criticising the Bible, or Homer, by methods like those which prove Shakspeare to have been Bacon. One must protest, too, against the presentation of inconsistent and probably baseless critical hypotheses in the dogmatic brevity of cheap handbooks.

Yet again, whence comes the moral element in Jehovah? Mr. Huxley thinks that it possibly came from the ethical practice and theory of Egypt. In the Egyptian Book of the Dead, 'a sort of Guide to Spirit Land,' there are moral chapters; the ghost tells his judges in Amenti what sins he has *not* committed. Many of these sins are forbidden in the Ten Commandments. They are just as much forbidden in the nascent morality of savage peoples. Moses did not need the Book of the Dead to teach him elementary morals. From the mysteries of Mtanga he might have learned, also, had he been present, the virtue of unselfish generosity. If the creed of Jehovah, or of El, retained only as much of ethics as is under divine sanction among the Kurnai, adaptation from the Book of the Dead was superfluous.

The care for the departed, the ritual of the Ka, the intense pre-occupation with the future life, which, far more than its morality, are the essential characteristics of the Book of the Dead—Israel cared for none of these animistic things, brought none of these, or very little of these, out of the land of Egypt. Moses was certainly very eclectic; he took only the morality of Egypt. But as Mr. Huxley advances this opinion tentatively, as having no secure historical authority about Moses, it hardly answers our question, Whence came the moral

conjectures, and, generally, for criticisms of the occasional vagaries of critics.



element in Jehovah? One may surmise that it was the survival of the primitive divinely sanctioned ethics of the ancient savage ancestors of the Israelite, known to them, as to the Kurnai, before they had a pot, or a bronze knife, or seed to sow, or sheep to herd, or even a tent over their heads. In the counsels of eternity Israel was chosen to keep burning, however obscured with smoke of sacrifice, that flame which illumines the darkest places of the earth, 'a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel'—a flame how litten a light whence shining, history cannot inform us, and anthropology can but conjecture. Here scientific nescience is wiser than the cocksureness of popular science, with her ghosts and fetish-stones, and gods that sprang from ghosts, which ghosts, however, could not be developed, owing to nomadic habits.

It appears, then, if our general suggestion meets with any acceptance, that what occurred in the development of Hebrew religion was precisely what the Bible tells us did occur. This must necessarily seem highly paradoxical to our generation; but the whole trend of our provisional system makes in favour of the paradox. If savage nomadic Israel had the higher religious conceptions proved to exist among several of the lowest known races, these conceptions might be revived by a leader of genius. They might, in a crisis of tribal fortunes, become the rallying point of a new national sentiment. Obscured, in some degree, by acquaintance with 'the idols of Egypt,' and restricted and localised by the very national sentiment which they fostered, these conceptions were purified and widened far beyond any local, tribal, or national restrictions—widened far as the *flammanitia moenia mundi*—by the historically unique genius of the Prophets. Blended with the doctrine of our Lord, and recommended by the addition of Animism in its pure and priceless form—the reward of faith, hope, and charity in eternal life—the faith of Israel enlightened the world.

All this is precisely what occurred, according to the Old and New Testaments. All this is just what, on our

hypothesis, might be expected to occur if, out of the many races which, in their most backward culture, had a rude conception of a Moral Creative Being, relatively supreme, one race endured the education of Israel, showed the comparative indifference of Israel to Animism and ghost-gods, listened to the Prophets of Israel, and gave birth to a greater than Moses and the Prophets.

To this result the Logos, as Socrates says, has led us, by the path of anthropology.

## XVII

## CONCLUSION

WE may now glance backward at the path which we have tried to cut through the jungles of early religions. It is not a highway, but the track of a solitary explorer; and this essay pretends to be no more than a sketch—not an exhaustive survey of creeds. Its limitations are obvious, but may here be stated. The higher and even the lower polytheisms are only alluded to in passing, our object being to keep well in view the conception of a Supreme, or practically Supreme, Being, from the lowest stages of human culture up to Christianity. In polytheism that conception is necessarily obscured, showing itself dimly either in the *Prytanis*, or President of the Immortals, such as Zeus; or in Fate, behind and above the Immortals; or in Mr. Max Müller's *Henotheism*, where the god addressed—Indra, or Soma, or Agni—is, for the moment, envisaged as supreme, and is adored in something like a monotheistic spirit; or, finally, in the etherealised deity of advanced philosophic speculation.

It has not been necessary, for our purpose, to dwell on these civilised religions. Granting our hypothesis of an early Supreme Being among savages, obscured later by ancestor-worship and ghost-gods, but not often absolutely lost to religious tradition, the barbaric and the civilised polytheisms easily take their position in line, and are easily intelligible. Space forbids a discussion of all known religions; only typical specimens have been selected. Thus, nothing has been said of the religion

of the great Chinese empire. It appears to consist, on its higher plane, of the worship of Heaven as a great fetish-god—a worship which may well have begun in days, as Dr. Brinton says, ‘long ere man had asked himself, “Are the heavens material and God spiritual?”’—perhaps, for all we know, before the idea of ‘spirit’ had been evolved. Thus, if it contains nothing more august, the Chinese religion is, so far, beneath that of the Zúñis, or the creed in Taa-roa, in Beings who are eternal, who were before earth was or sky was. The Chinese religion of Heaven is also coloured by Chinese political conditions; Heaven (Tien) corresponds to the Emperor, and tends to be confounded with Shang-ti, the Emperor above. ‘Dr. Legge charges Confucius,’ says Mr. Tylor, ‘with an inclination to substitute, in his religious teaching, the name of Tien, Heaven, for that known to more ancient religion, and used in more ancient books—Shang-ti, the personal ruling deity.’ If so, China too has its ancient Supreme Being, who is not a divinised aspect of nature.

But Mr. Tylor’s reading, in harmony with his general theory, is different :

‘It seems, rather, that the sage was, in fact, upholding the tradition of the ancient faith, thus acting according to the character on which he prided himself—that of a transmitter, not a maker, a preserver of old knowledge, not a new revealer.’<sup>1</sup>

This, of course, is purely a question of evidence, to be settled by Sinologists. If the personal Supreme Being, Shang-ti, occupies in older documents the situation held by Tien (Heaven) in Confucius’s later system, why are we to say that Confucius, by putting forward Heaven in place of Shang-ti, was restoring an older conception? Mr. Tylor’s affection for his theory leads him, perhaps, to that opinion; while my affection for my theory leads me to prefer documentary evidence in its favour.

The question can only be settled by specialists. As matters stand, it seems to me probable that ancient

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Cult.* ii. 352.

China possessed a Supreme Personal Being, more remote and original than Heaven, just as the Zuñis do. On the lower plane, Chinese religion is overrun, as everyone knows, by Animism and ancestor-worship. This is so powerful that it has given rise to a native theory of Euhemerism. The departmental deities of Chinese polytheism are explained by the Chinese on Euhemeristic principles:

‘According to legend, the War God, or Military Sage, was once, in human life, a distinguished soldier; the Swine God was a hog-breeder who lost his pigs and died of sorrow; the God of Gamblers was *un décavé*.’<sup>1</sup>

These are not statements of fact, but of Chinese Euhemeristic theory. On that hypothesis, Confucius should now be a god; but of course he is not; his spirit is merely localised in his temple, where the Emperor worships him twice a year as ancestral spirits are worshipped.

Every theorist will force facts into harmony with his system, but I do not see that the Chinese facts are contrary to mine. On the highest plane is either a personal Supreme Being, Shang-ti, or there is Tien, Heaven (with Earth, parent of men), neither of them necessarily owing, in origin, anything to Animism. Then there is the political reflection of the Emperor on Religion (which cannot exist where there is no Emperor, King, or Chief, and therefore must be late), there is the animistic rabble of spirits ancestral or not, and there is departmental polytheism. The spirits are, of course, fed and furnished by men in the usual symbolical way. Nothing shows or hints that Shang-ti is merely an imaginary idealised first ancestor. Indeed, about all such explanations of the Supreme Being (say among the Kurnai) as an idealised imaginary first ancestor, M. Réville justly observes as follows: ‘Not only have we seen that, in wide regions of the uncivilised world, the worship of ancestors has invaded a domain previously occupied by “Naturism” and Animism

<sup>1</sup> Abridged from *Prim. Cult.* ii. 119.

properly so called, that it is, therefore, posterior to these; but, further, we do not understand, in Mr. Spencer's system, why, in so many places, the first ancestor is the Maker, if not the Creator of the world, Master of life and death, and possessor of divine powers, not held by any of his descendants. This proves that it was not the first ancestor who became God, in the belief of his descendants, but much rather the Divine Maker and Beginner of all, who, in the creed of his adorers, became the first ancestor.' <sup>1</sup>

Our task has been limited, in this way, mainly to examination of the religion of some of the very lowest races, and of the highest world-religions, such as Judaism. The historical aspect of Christianity, as arising in the Life, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord, would demand a separate treatise. This would, in part, be concerned with the attempts to find in the narratives concerning our Lord, a large admixture of the mythology and ritual connected with the sacrificed *Rex Nemorensis*, and whatever else survives in peasant folk-lore of spring and harvest.<sup>2</sup>

After these apologies for the limitations of this essay, we may survey the backward track. We began by showing that savages may stumble, and have stumbled, on theories not inconsistent with science, but not till recently discovered by science. The electric origin of the Aurora Borealis (whether absolutely certain or not) was

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire des Religions*, ii. 237, note. M. Réville's system, it will be observed, differs from mine in that he finds the first essays of religion in worship of aspects of nature (*naturisme*) and in 'animism properly so called,' by which he understands the instinctive, perhaps not explicitly formulated, sense that all things whatever are animated and personal. I have not remarked this aspect of belief as much prevalent in the most backward races, and I do not try to look behind what we know historically about early religion. I so far agree with M. Réville as to think the belief in ghosts and spirits (Mr. Tylor's 'Animism') not necessarily postulated in the original indeterminate conception of the Supreme Being, or generally, in 'Original Gods.' But M. Réville says, 'L'objet de la religion humaine est nécessairement un esprit' (*Prolegomènes*, 107). This does not seem consistent with his own theory.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* with Mr. Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God*.

an example; another was the efficacy of 'suggestion,' especially for curative purposes. It was, therefore, hinted that, if savages blundered (if you please) into a belief in God and the Soul, however obscurely envisaged, these beliefs were not therefore necessarily and essentially false. We then stated our purpose of examining the alleged supernormal phenomena, savage or civilised, which, on Mr. Tylor's hypothesis, help to originate the conception of 'spirits.' We defended the nature of our evidence, as before anthropologists, by showing that, for the savage belief in the supernormal phenomena, we have exactly the kind of evidence on which all anthropological science reposes. The relative weakness of that evidence, our need of more and better evidence, we would be the very last to deny, indeed it is part of our case. Our existing evidence will hardly support any theory of religion. Anyone who is in doubt on that head has only to read M. Réville's 'Les Religions des Peuples Non-Civilisés,' under the heads 'Mélanésiens,' 'Mincopies,' 'Les Australiens' (ii. 116-143), when he will observe that this eminent French authority is ignorant of the facts about these races here produced. In 1883 they had not come within his ken. Such minute and careful inquiries by men closely intimate with the peoples concerned, as Dr. Codrington's, Mr. Howitt's, Mr. Man's, and the authorities compiled by Mr. Brough Smyth, were unfamiliar to M. Réville. Thus, in turn, new facts, or facts unknown to us, may upset my theory. This peril is of the essence of scientific theorising on the history of religion.

Having thus justified our evidence for the savage *belief* in supernormal phenomena, as before anthropologists, we turned to a court of psychologists in defence of our evidence for the *fact* of exactly the same supernormal phenomena in civilised experience. We pointed out that for subjective psychological experiences, say of telepathy, we had precisely the same evidence as all non-experimental psychology must and does rest upon. Nay, we have even experimental evidence, in experiments in thought-transference. We have chiefly, however, state-

ments of subjective experience. For the coincidence of such experience with unknown events we have such evidence as, in practical life, is admitted by courts of law.

Experimental psychology, of course, relies on experiments conducted under the eyes of the expert, for example, by hypnotism or otherwise, under Dr. Hack Tuke, Professor James, M. Richet, M. Janet. The evidence is the conduct rather than the statements of the subject. There is also physiological experiment, by vivisection (I regret to say) and post-mortem dissection. But non-experimental psychology reposes on the self-examination of the student, and on the statements of psychological experiences made to him by persons whom he thinks he can trust. The psychologist, however, if he be, as Mr. Galton says, 'unimaginative in the strict but unusual sense of that ambiguous word,' needs Mr. Galton's 'word of warning.' He is asked 'to resist a too frequent tendency to assume that the minds of every other sane and healthy person must be like his own. The psychologist should inquire into the minds of others as he should into those of animals of different races, and be prepared to find much to which his own experience can afford little if any clue.'<sup>1</sup> Mr. Galton had to warn the unimaginative psychologist in this way, because he was about to unfold his discovery of the faculty which presents numbers to some minds as visualised coloured numerals, 'so vivid as to be undistinguishable from reality, except by the aid of accidental circumstances.'

Mr. Galton also found in his inquiries that occasional hallucinations of the sane are much more prevalent than he had supposed, or than science had ever taken into account. All this was entirely new to psychologists, many of whom still (at least many popular psychologists of the press) appear to be unacquainted with the circumstances. One of them informed me, quite gravely, that '*he* never had an hallucination,' therefore—*his* mind being sane and healthy—the inference seemed to be that

<sup>1</sup> J.A.I. x. 85.



no sane and healthy mind was ever hallucinated. Mr. Galton has replied to *that* argument! His reply covers, logically, the whole field of psychological faculties little regarded, for example, by Mr. Sully, who is not exactly an imaginative psychologist.

It covers the whole field of automatism (as in automatic writing) perhaps of the divining rod, certainly of crystal visions and of occasional hallucinations, as Mr. Galton, in this last case, expressly declares. Psychologists at least need not be told that such faculties cannot, any more than other human faculties, be always evoked for study and experiment. Our evidence for these faculties and experiences, then, is usually of the class on which the psychologist relies. But, when the psychologist, following Leibnitz, Sir William Hamilton, and Kant, discusses the Subconscious (for example, knowledge, often complex and abundant, unconsciously acquired) we demonstrated by examples that the psychologist will contentedly repose on evidence which is not evidence at all. He will swallow an undated, unlocalised legend of Coleridge, reaching Coleridge on the testimony of rumour, and told at least twenty years after the unverified occurrences. Nay, the psychologist will never dream of procuring contemporary evidence for such a monstrous statement as that an ignorant German wench unconsciously acquired and afterwards subconsciously reproduced huge cantles of dead languages, by virtue of having casually heard a former master recite or read aloud from Hebrew and Greek books. This legend do psychologists accept on no evidence at all, because it illustrates a theory which is, doubtless, a very good theory, though, in this case, carried to an extent 'imagination boggles at.'

Here the psychologist may reply that much less evidence will content him for a fact to which he possesses, at least, analogies in accredited experience, than for a fact (say telepathic crystal-gazing) to which *he* knows, in experience, nothing analogous. Thus, for the mythical German handmaid, he has the analogy of languages learned in childhood, or passages got up by

rote, being forgotten and brought back to ordinary conscious memory, or delirious memory, during an illness, or shortly before death. Strong in these analogies, the psychologist will venture to accept a case of language *not* learned, but reproduced in delirious memory, on no evidence at all. But, not possessing analogies for telepathic crystal-gazing, he will probably decline to examine ours.

I would first draw his attention to the difference between revived memory of a language once known (Breton and Welsh in known examples), or learned by rote (as Greek, in an anecdote of Goethe's), and verbal reproduction of a language *not* known or learned by rote, but overheard—each passage probably but once—as somebody recited fragments. In this instance (that of the mythical maid) 'the difficulty . . . is that the original impressions had not the strength—that is, the distinctness—of the reproduction. An unknown language overheard is a mere sound . . .'<sup>1</sup>

The distinction here drawn is so great and obvious that for proof of the German girl's case we need better evidence than Coleridge's rumour of a rumour, cited, as it is, by Hamilton, Maudsley, Carpenter, Du Prel, and the common run of manuals.

Not that I deny, *a priori*, the possibility of Coleridge's story. As Mr. Huxley says, 'strictly speaking, I am unaware of anything that has a right to the title of an "impossibility," except a contradiction in terms.'<sup>2</sup> To the horror of some of his admirers, Mr. Huxley would not call the existence of demons and demoniacal possession 'impossible.'<sup>3</sup> Mr. Huxley was no blind follower of Hume. I, too, do not call Coleridge's tale 'impossible,' but, unlike the psychologists, I refuse to accept it on 'Bardolph's security.' And I contrast their conduct, in swallowing Coleridge's legend, with their refusal (if they do refuse) to accept the evidence for the automatic writing of not-consciously-known languages (as

<sup>1</sup> Massey. Note to Du Prel, *Philosophy of Mysticism*, ii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Science and Christian Tradition*, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 195.

of eleventh-century French poetry and prose by Mr. Schiller), or their refusal (if they do refuse) to look at the evidence for telepathic crystal-gazing, or any other supernormal exhibitions of faculty, attested by living and honourable persons.

I wish I saw a way for orthodox unimaginative psychology out of its dilemma.

After offering to anthropologists and psychologists these considerations, which I purposely reiterate, we examined historically the relations of science to 'the marvellous,' showing for example how Hume, following his *a priori* theory of the impossible, would have declined to investigate, because they were 'miraculous,' certain occurrences which, to Charcot, were ordinary incidents in medical experience.

We next took up and criticised the anthropological theory of religion as expounded by Mr. Tylor. We then collected from his work a series of alleged supernormal phenomena in savage belief, all making for the foundation of animistic religion. Through several chapters we pursued the study of these phenomena, choosing savage instances, and setting beside them civilised testimony to facts of experience. Our conclusion was that such civilised experiences, if they occurred, as they are universally said to do, among savages, would help to originate, and would very strongly support the savage doctrine of souls, the base of religion in the theory of English anthropologists. But apart from the savage doctrine of 'spirits' (whether they exist or not), the evidence points to the existence of human faculties not allowed for in the current systems of materialism.

We next turned from the subject of supernormal experiences to the admitted facts about early religion. Granting the belief in souls and ghosts and spirits, however attained, how was the idea of a Supreme Being to be evolved out of that belief? We showed that, taking the creed as found in the lowest races, the processes put forward by anthropologists could not account for its evolution. The facts would not fit into, but contradicted,

the anthropological theory. The necessary social conditions postulated were not found in places where the belief is found. Nay, the necessary social conditions for the evolution even of ancestor-worship were confessedly not found where the supposed ultimate result of ancestor-worship, the belief in a Supreme Being, flourished abundantly.

Again, the belief in a Supreme Being, *ex hypothesi* the latest in evolution, therefore the most potent, was often shelved and half forgotten, or neglected, or ridiculed, where the belief in Animism (*ex hypothesi* the earlier) was in full vigour. We demonstrated by facts that Anthropology had simplified her task by ignoring that essential feature, *the prevalent alliance of ethics with religion*, in the creed of the lowest and least developed races. Here, happily, we have not only the evidence of an earnest animist, Mr. Im Thurn, on our side, but that of a distinguished Semitic scholar, the late Mr. Robertson Smith. 'We see that even in its rudest forms Religion was a moral force, the powers that man reveres were on the side of social order and moral law; and the fear of the gods was a motive to enforce the laws of society, which were also the laws of morality.'<sup>1</sup> Wellhausen has already been cited to the same effect.

However, the facts proving that truth, and unselfishness, surely a large element of Christian ethics, are divinely sanctioned in savage religion are more potent than the most learned opinion on that side.

Our next step was to examine in detail several religions of the most remote and backward races, of races least contaminated with Christian or Islamite teaching. Our evidence, when possible, was derived from ancient and secret tribal mysteries, and sacred native hymns. We found a relatively Supreme Being, a Maker, sanctioning morality, and unpropitiated by sacrifice, among peoples who go in dread of ghosts and wizards, but do not always worship ancestors. We showed that the anthropological theory of the evolution of God out of

<sup>1</sup> *Religion of the Semites*, p. 53.

ghosts in no way explains the facts in the savage conception of a Supreme Being. We then argued that the notion of 'spirit,' derived from ghost-belief, was not logically needed for the conception of a Supreme Being in its earliest form, was detrimental to the conception, and, by much evidence, was denied to be part of the conception. The Supreme Being, thus regarded, may be (though he cannot historically be shown to be) prior to the first notion of ghost and separable souls.

We then traced the idea of such a Supreme Being through the creeds of races rising in the scale of material culture, demonstrating that he was thrust aside by the competition of ravenous but serviceable ghosts, ghost-gods, and shades of kingly ancestors, with their magic and their bloody rites. These rites and the animistic conception behind them were next, in rare cases, reflected or refracted back on the Supreme Eternal. Aristocratic institutions fostered polytheism with the old Supreme Being obscured, or superseded, or enthroned as Emperor-God, or King-God. We saw how, and in what sense, the old degeneration theory could be defined and defended. We observed traces of degeneration in certain archaic aspects of the faith in Jehovah; and we proved that (given a tolerably pure low savage belief in a Supreme Being) that belief *must* degenerate, under social conditions, as civilisation advanced. Next, studying what we may call the restoration of Jehovah, under the great Prophets of Israel, we noted that they, and Israel generally, were strangely indifferent to that priceless aspect of Animism, the care for the future happiness, as conditioned by the conduct of the individual soul. That aspect had been neglected neither by the popular instinct nor the priestly and philosophic reflection of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Christianity, last, combined what was good in Animism, the care for the individual soul as an immortal spirit under eternal responsibilities, with the One righteous Eternal of prophetic Israel, and so ended the long, intricate, and mysterious theological education of humanity. Such is our theory, which does not, to us, appear to lack

evidence, nor to be inconsistent (as the anthropological theory is apparently inconsistent) with the hypothesis of evolution.

All this, it must be emphatically insisted on, is propounded 'under all reserves.' While these four stages, say (1) the Australian unpropitiated Moral Being, (2) the African neglected Being, still somewhat moral, (3) the relatively Supreme Being involved in human sacrifice, as in Polynesia, and (4) the Moral Being reinstated philosophically, or in Israel, do suggest steps in evolution, we desire to base no hard-and-fast system of ascending and descending degrees upon our present evidence. The real object is to show that facts may be regarded in this light, as well as in the light thrown by the anthropological theory, in the hands whether of Mr. Tylor, Mr. Spencer, M. Réville, or Mr. Jevons, whose interesting work comes nearest to our provisional hypothesis. We only ask for suspense of judgment, and for hesitation in accepting the dogmas of modern manual-makers. An exception to them certainly appears to be Mr. Clodd, if we may safely attribute to him a review (signed C.) of Mr. Grant Allen's 'Evolution of the Idea of God.'

'We fear that all our speculations will remain summaries of probabilities. No documents are extant to enlighten us; we have only mobile, complex and confused ideas, incarnate in eccentric, often contradictory theories. That this character attaches to such ideas should keep us on guard against framing theories whose symmetry is sometimes their condemnation' ('Daily Chronicle,' December 10, 1897).

Nothing excites my own suspicion of my provisional hypothesis more than its symmetry. It really seems to fit the facts, as they appear to me, too neatly. I would suggest, however, that ancient savage sacred hymns, and practices in the mysteries, are really rather of the nature of 'documents;' more so, at least, than the casual observations of some travellers, or the gossip extracted from natives much in contact with Europeans.

Supposing that the arguments in this essay met with some acceptance, what effect would they have, if any, on our thoughts about religion? What is their practical tendency? The least dubious effect would be, I hope, to prevent us from accepting the anthropological theory of religion, or any other theory, as a foregone conclusion. I have tried to show how dim is our knowledge, how weak, often, is our evidence, and that, finding among the lowest savages all the elements of all religions already developed in different degrees, we cannot, historically, say that one is earlier than another. This point of priority we can never historically settle. If we met savages with ghosts and no gods, we could not be sure but that they once possessed a God, and forgot him. If we met savages with a God and no ghosts, we could not be historically certain that a higher had not obliterated a lower creed. For these reasons dogmatic decisions about the *origin* of religion seem unworthy of science. They will appear yet more futile to any student who goes so far with me as to doubt whether the highest gods of the lowest races could be developed, or can be shown to have been developed, by way of the ghost-theory. To him who reaches this point the whole animistic doctrine of ghosts as the one germ of religion will appear to be imperilled. The main practical result, then, will be hesitation about accepting the latest scientific opinion, even when backed by great names, and published in little primers.

On the hypothesis here offered to criticism there are two chief sources of Religion, (1) the belief, how attained we know not,<sup>1</sup> in a powerful, moral, eternal, omniscient Father and Judge of men; (2) the belief (probably developed out of experiences normal and supernormal) in somewhat of man which may survive the grave. This second belief is not, logically, needed as given material for the first, in its apparently earliest form. It may, for all we know, be the later of the two beliefs, chronologically. But this belief, too, was necessary to religion; first, as finally supplying a formula by which advancing

<sup>1</sup> The hypothesis of St. Paul seems not the most unsatisfactory, Rom. i. 19.

intellects could conceive of the Mighty Being involved in the former creed; next, as elevating man's conception of his own nature. By the second belief he becomes the child of the God in whom, perhaps, he already trusted, and in whom he has his being, a being not destined to perish with the death of the body. Man is thus not only the child but the heir of God, a 'nurseling of immortality,' capable of entering into eternal life. On the moral influence of this belief it is superfluous to dwell.

From the most backward races historically known to us, to those of our own status, all have been more or less washed by the waters of this double stream of religion. The Hebrews, as far as our information goes, were chiefly influenced by the first belief, the faith in the Eternal; and had comparatively slight interest in whatever posthumous fortunes might await individual souls. Other civilised peoples, say the Greeks, extended the second, or animistic theory, into forms of beautiful fantasy, the material of art. Yet both in Greece and Rome, as we learn from the 'Republic' (Books i. iii.) of Plato, and from the whole scope of the poem of Lucretius, and from the Painted Porch at Delphi, answering to the frescoes of the Pisan Campo Santo, there existed, among the people, what was unknown to the Hebrews, an extreme anxiety about the posthumous fortunes and possible punishment of the individual soul. A kind of pardoners and indulgence-sellers made a living out of that anxiety in Greece. For the Greek pardoners, who testify to an interest in the future happiness of the soul not found in Israel, Mr. Jevons may be cited:

'The *agyrtes* professed by means of his rites to purify men from the sins they had themselves committed . . . and so to secure to those whom he purified an exemption from the evil lot in the next world which awaited those who were not initiated.' 'A magic mirror' (crystal-gazing) 'was among his properties.'<sup>1</sup>

In Egypt a moral life did not suffice to secure

<sup>1</sup> *Introd. to Hist. of Rel.* p. 333; Aristoph. *Frogs*, 159,



immortal reward. There was also required knowledge of the spells that baffle the demons who, in Amenti, as in the Red Indian and Polynesian Hades, lie in wait for souls. That knowledge was contained in copies of the Book of the Dead—the *gagne-pain* of priests and scribes.

Early Israel, having, as far as we know, a singular lack of interest in the future of the soul, was born to give himself up to developing, undisturbed, the theistic conception, the belief in a righteous Eternal.

Polytheism everywhere—in Greece especially—held of the animistic conception, with its freakish, corruptible deities. Greek philosophy could hardly restore that Eternal for whom the Prophets battled in Israel; whom some of the lowest savages know and fear; whom the animistic theory or cult everywhere obscures with its crowd of hungry, cruel, interested, food-propitiated ghost-gods. In the religion of our Lord and the Apostles the two currents of faith in one righteous God and care for the individual soul were purified and combined. 'God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' Man also is a spirit, and, as such, is in the hands of a God not to be propitiated by man's sacrifice or monk's ritual. We know how this doctrine was again disturbed by the Animism, in effect, and by the sacrifice and ritual of the Mediæval Church. Too eager 'to be all things to all men,' the august and beneficent Mother of Christendom readmitted the earlier Animism in new forms of saint-worship, pilgrimage, and popular ceremonial—things apart from, but commonly supposed to be substitutes for, righteousness of life and the selflessness enjoined in savage mysteries. For the softness, no less than for the hardness of men's hearts, these things were ordained: such as masses for the beloved dead.

Modern thought has deanthropomorphised what was left of anthropomorphic in religion, and, in the end, has left us for God, at most, 'a stream of tendency making for righteousness,' or an energy unknown and unknow-

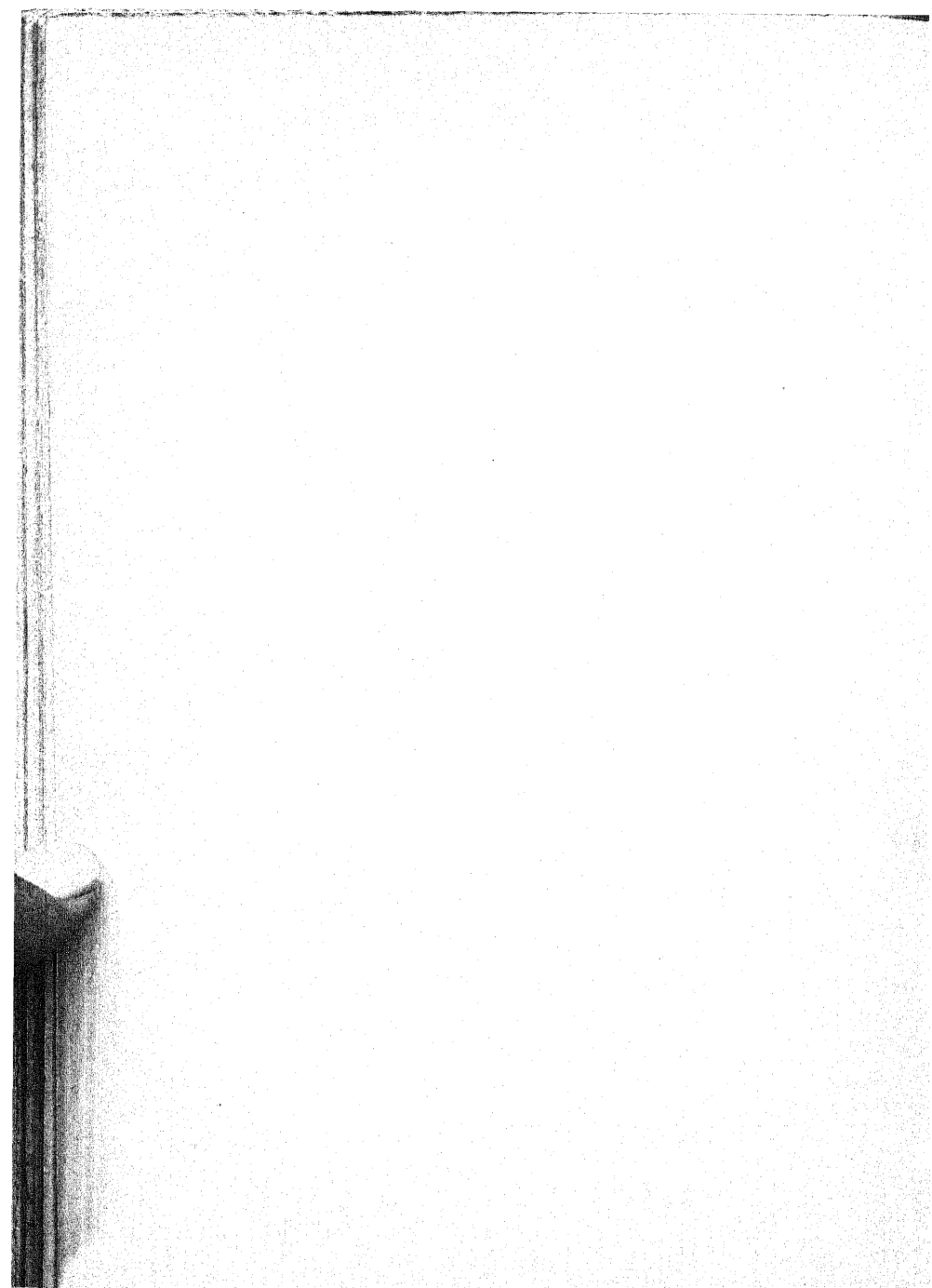
able—the ghost of a ghost. For the soul, by virtue of his belief in which man raised himself in his own esteem, and, more or less, in ethical standing, is left to us a negation or a wistful doubt.

To this part of modern scientific teaching the earlier position of this essay suggests a demurrer. By aid of the tradition of and belief in supernormal phenomena among the low races, by attested phenomena of the same kinds of experience among the higher races, I have ventured to try to suggest that 'we are not merely brain;' that man has his part, we know not how, in we know not what—has faculties and vision scarcely conditioned by the limits of his normal purview. The evidence of all this deals with matters often trivial, like the electric sparks rubbed from the deer's hide, which yet are cognate with an illimitable, essential potency of the universe. Not being able to explain away these facts, or, in this place, to offer what would necessarily be a premature theory of them, I regard them, though they seem shadowy, as grounds of hope, or, at least, as tokens that men need not yet despair. Not now for the first time have weak things of the earth been chosen to confound things strong. Nor have men of this opinion been always the weakest; not among the feeblest are Socrates, Pascal, Napoleon, Cromwell, Charles Gordon, St. Theresa, and Jeanne d'Arc.

I am perfectly aware that the 'superstitiousness' of the earlier part of this essay must injure any effect which the argument of the latter part might possibly produce on critical opinion. Yet that argument in no way depends on what we think about the phenomena—normal, supernormal, or illusory—on which the theory of ghost, soul, or spirit may have been based. It exhibits religion as probably beginning in a kind of Theism, which is then superseded, in some degree, or even corrupted, by Animism in all its varieties. Finally, the exclusive Theism of Israel receives its complement in a purified Animism, and emerges as Christianity.

Quite apart, too, from any favourable conclusion

which may, by some, be drawn from the phenomena, and quite apart from the more general opinion that all modern instances are compact of imposture, malobservation, mythopœic memory, and superstitious bias, the systematic comparison of civilised and savage beliefs and alleged experiences of this kind cannot wisely be neglected by Anthropology. *Humani nihil a se alienum putat.*



# APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A

### OPPOSITIONS OF SCIENCE

THE most elaborate reply to the arguments for telepathy, based on the Report of the Census of Hallucinations, is that of Herr Parish, in his 'Hallucinations and Illusions.'<sup>1</sup>

Herr Parish is, at present, opposed to the theory that the Census establishes a telepathic cause in the so-called 'coincidental' stories, 'put forward,' as he says, 'with due reserve, and based on an astonishing mass of materials, to some extent critically handled.'

He first demurs to an allowance of twelve hours for the coincidence of hallucination and death; but, if we reflect that twelve hours is little even in a year, coincidences within twelve hours, it may be admitted, *donnent à penser*, even if we reject the theory that, granted a real telepathic impact, it may need time and quiet for its development into a complete hallucination. We need not linger over the very queer cases from Munich, as these are not in the selected thirty of the Report. Herr Parish then dwells on that *hallucination of memory*, in which we feel as if everything that is going on had happened before. It may have occurred to most of us to be reminded by some association of ideas during the day, of some dream of the previous night, which we had forgotten. For instance, looking at a brook from a

<sup>1</sup> Walter Scott.

bridge, and thinking of how I would fish it, I remembered that I had dreamed, on the previous night, of casting a fly for practice, on a lawn. Nobody would think of disputing the fact that I really had such a dream, forgot it and remembered it when reminded of it by association of ideas. But if the forgotten dream had been 'fulfilled,' and been recalled to memory only in the moment of fulfilment, science would deny that I ever had such a dream at all. The alleged dream would be described as an 'hallucination of memory.' Something occurring, it would be said, I had the not very unusual sensation, 'This has occurred to me before,' and the sensation would become a false memory that it *had* occurred—in a dream. This theory will be advanced, I think, not when an ordinary dream is recalled by a waking experience, but only when the dream coincides with and foreruns that experience, which is a thing that dreams have no business to do. Such coincidental dreams are necessarily 'false memories,' scientifically speaking. Now, how does this theory of false memory bear on coincidental hallucinations?

The insane, it seems, are apt to have the false memory 'This occurred before,' and *then* to say that the event was revealed to them in a vision.<sup>1</sup> The insane may be recommended to make a note of the vision, and have it properly attested, *before* the event. The same remark applies to the 'presentiments' of the sane. But it does *not* apply if Jones tells me 'I saw my great aunt last night,' and if news comes *after* this remark that Jones's aunt died, on that night, in Timbuctoo. Yet Herr Parish (p. 282) seems to think that the argument of fallacious memory comes in pat, even when an hallucination has been reported to another person *before* its fulfilment. Of course all depends on the veracity of the narrator and the person to whom he told his tale. To take a case given: <sup>2</sup> Brown, say, travelling with his wife, dreams that a mad dog bit his boy at home on the elbow. He tells his wife. Arriving at home Brown finds that it was so. Herr Parish appears to argue thus:

<sup>1</sup> Parish, p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 282, 283.

Brown dreamed nothing at all, but he gets excited when he hears the bad news at home; he thinks, by false memory, that he has a recollection of it, he says to his wife, 'My dear, didn't I tell you, last night, I had dreamed all this?' and his equally excited wife replies, 'True, my Brown, you *did*, and I said it was only one of your dreams.' And *both* now believe that the dream occurred. This is very plausible, is it not? only science would not say anything about it if the dream had *not* been fulfilled—if Brown had remarked, 'Egad, my dear, seeing that horse reminds me that I was dreaming last night of driving in a dog-cart.' For then Brown was not excited.

None of this exquisite reasoning as to dreams applies to waking hallucinations, reported before the alleged coincidence, unless we accept a collective hallucination of memory in seer or seers, and also in the persons to whom their story was told.

But, it is obvious, memory is apt to become mythopœic, so far as to exaggerate closeness of coincidence, and to add romantic details. We do not need Herr Parish to tell us *that*; we meet the circumstance in all narratives from memory, whatever the topic, even in Herr Parish's own writings.

We must admit that the public, in ghostly, as in all narratives on all topics, is given to 'fanciful addenda.' Therefore, as Herr Parish justly remarks, we should 'maintain a very sceptical attitude to all accounts' of veridical hallucinations. 'Not that we should dismiss them as old wives' fables—an all too common method—or even doubt the narrator's good faith.' We should treat them like tales of big fish that get away; sometimes there is good corroborative evidence that they really *were* big fish, sometimes not. We shall return to these false memories.

Was there a coincidence at all in the Society's cases printed in the Census? Herr Parish thinks three of the selected twenty-six cases very dubious. In one case is a *possible* margin of four days, another (wrongly numbered by the way) does not occur at all among the twenty-

six. In the third, Herr Parish is wrong in his statement.<sup>1</sup> This is a lovely example of the sceptical slipshod, and, accompanied by the miscitation of the second case, shows that inexactitude is not all on the side of the seers. However the case is not very good, the two percipients fancying that the date of the event was less remote than it really was. Unluckily Herr Parish only criticises these three cases, how accurately we have remarked. He had no room for more.

Herr Parish next censures the probable selection of good cases by collectors, on which the editors of the Census have already made observations, as they have also made large allowances for this cause of error. He then offers the astonishing statement that, 'in the view of the English authors, a view which is, of course, assumed in all calculations of the kind, an hallucination persists equally long in the memory and is equally readily recalled in reply to a question, whether the experience made but a slight impression on the percipient, or affected him deeply, as would be the case, for instance, if the hallucination had been found to coincide with the death of a near relative or friend.'<sup>2</sup> This assertion of Herr Parish's is so erroneous that the Report expressly says 'as years recede into the distance,' the proportion of the hallucinations that are remembered in them to those which are forgotten, or at least ignored, 'is very large.' Again, 'Hallucinations of the most impressive class will not only be better remembered than others, but will, we may reasonably suppose, be more often mentioned by the percipients to their friends.'<sup>3</sup>

Yet Herr Parish avers that, in all calculations, it is assumed that hallucinations are equally readily recalled whether impressive or not! Once more, the Report says (p. 246), '*It is not the case*' that coincidental (and impressive) hallucinations are as easily subject to oblivion as non-coincidental, and non-impressive ones. The editors therefore multiply the non-coincidental cases by

<sup>1</sup> P. 287, Mr. Sims, *Proceedings*, x. 230.

<sup>2</sup> Parish pp. 288, 289.

<sup>3</sup> *Report*, p. 68.



four, arguing that no coincidental cases (hits) are forgotten, while three out of four non-coincidentals (misses) are forgotten, or may be supposed likely to be forgotten. Immediately after declaring that the English authors suppose all hallucinations to be equally well remembered (which is the precise reverse of what they do say), Herr Parish admits that the authors multiply the misses by four, 'influenced by other considerations' (p. 289). By what other considerations? They give their reason (that very reason which they decline to entertain, says Herr Parish), namely, that misses are four times as likely to be forgotten as hits. 'To go into the reason for adopting this plan would lead us too far,' he writes. Why, it is the very reason which, he says, does *not* find favour with the English authors!

How curiously remote from being 'coincidental' with plain facts, or 'veridical' at all, is this scientific criticism! Herr Parish says that a 'view' (which does not exist) is 'of course assumed in all calculations;' and, on the very same page, he says that it is *not* assumed! 'The witnesses of the report—influenced, it is true, by other considerations' (which is not the case), 'have sought to turn the point of this objection by multiplying the whole number of (non-coincidental) cases by four.' Then the 'view' is *not* 'assumed in all calculations,' as Herr Parish has just asserted.

What led Herr Parish, an honourable and clear-headed critic, into this maze of incorrect and contradictory assertions? It is interesting to try to trace the causes of such *non-veridical illusions*, to find the *points de repère* of these literary hallucinations. One may suggest that when Herr Parish 'recast the chapters' of his German edition, as he says in his preface to the English version, he accidentally left in a passage based on an earlier paper by Mr. Gurney,<sup>1</sup> not observing that it was no longer accurate or appropriate.

After this odd passage, Herr Parish argues that a 'veridical' hallucination is regarded by the English

<sup>1</sup> P. 274, note 1.

authors as 'coincidental,' even when external circumstances have made that very hallucination a probable occurrence by producing 'tension of the corresponding nerve element groups.' That is to say, a person is in a condition—a nervous condition—likely, *a priori*, to beget an hallucination. An hallucination *is* begotten, quite naturally; and so, if it happens to coincide with an event, the coincidence should not count—it is purely fortuitous.<sup>1</sup>

Here is an example. A lady, facing an old sideboard, saw a friend, with no coat on, and in a waistcoat with a back of shiny material. Within an hour she was taken to where her friend lay dying, without a coat, and in a waistcoat with a shiny back.<sup>2</sup> Here is the scientific explanation of Herr Parish: 'The shimmer of a reflecting surface [the sideboard?] formed the occasion for the hallucinatory emergence of a subconsciously perceived *shiny black waistcoat* [quotation incorrect, of course], and an individual subconsciously associated with that impression.'<sup>3</sup> I ask any lady whether she, consciously or subconsciously, associates the men she knows with the backs of their waistcoats. Herr Parish's would be a brilliantly satisfactory explanation if it were only true to the printed words that lay under his eyes when he wrote. There was no 'shiny black waistcoat' in the case, but a waistcoat with a shiny *back*. Gentlemen, and especially old gentlemen who go about in bath-chairs (like the man in this story), don't habitually take off their coats and show the backs of their waistcoats to ladies of nineteen in England. And, if Herr Parish had cared to read his case, he would have found it expressly stated that the lady 'had never seen the man without his coat' (and so could not associate him with an impression of a shiny back to his waistcoat) till *after* the hallucination, when she saw him coatless on his death-bed. In this instance Herr Parish had an hallucinatory memory, all wrong, of the page under his eyes. The case is got rid of, then, by aid of the 'fanciful addenda,' to which Herr

<sup>1</sup> Parish, p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> *Report*, p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> Parish, p. 290.

Parish justly objects. He first gives the facts incorrectly, and then explains an occurrence which, as reported by him, did not occur, and was not asserted to occur.

I confess that, if Herr Parish's version were as correct as it is essentially inaccurate, his explanation would leave me doubtful. For the circumstances were that the old gentleman of the story lunched daily with the young lady's mother. Suppose that she was familiar (which she was not) with the shiny back of his waistcoat, still, she saw him daily, and daily, too, was in the way of seeing the (hypothetically) shiny surface of the sideboard. That being the case, she had, every day, the materials, subjective and objective, of the hallucination. Yet it only occurred *once*, and then it precisely coincided with the death agony of the old gentleman, and with his coatless condition. Why only that once? *C'est là le miracle!* 'How much for this little veskit?' as the man asked David Copperfield.

Herr Parish next invents a cause for an hallucination, which, I myself think, ought not to have been reckoned, because the percipient had been sitting up with the sick man. This he would class as a 'suspicious' case. But, even granting him his own way of handling the statistics, he would still have far too large a proportion of coincidences for the laws of chance to allow, if we are to go by these statistics at all.

His next argument practically is that hallucinations are always only a kind of dreams.<sup>1</sup> He proves this by the large number of coincidental hallucinations which occurred in sleepy circumstances. One man went to bed early, and woke up early; another was 'roused from sleep;' two ladies were sitting up in bed, giving their babies nourishment; a man was reading a newspaper on a sofa; a lady was lying awake at seven in the morning; and there are eight other English cases of people 'awake' in bed during an hallucination. Now, in Dr. Parish's opinion, we must argue that they were *not* awake, or not much; so the hallucinations were mere dreams.

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 291, 292.

Dreams are so numerous that coincidences in dreams can be got rid of as pure flukes. People may say, to be sure, 'I am used to dreams, and don't regard them; *this* was something solitary in my experience.' But we must not mind what people say.

Yet I fear we must mind what they say. At least, we must remember that sleeping dreams are, of all things, most easily forgotten; while a full-bodied hallucination, when we, at least, believe ourselves awake, seems to us on a perfectly different plane of impressiveness, and (*experto crede*) is really very difficult to forget. Herr Parish cannot be allowed, therefore, to use the regular eighteenth-century argument—'All dreams!' For the two sorts of dreams, in sleep and in apparent wakefulness, seem, to the subject, to differ in *kind*. And they really do differ in kind. It is the essence of the every night dream that we are unconscious of our actual surroundings and conscious of a fantastic environment. It is the essence of wideawakeness to be conscious of our actual surroundings. In the ordinary dream, nothing actual competes with its visions. When we are conscious of our surroundings, everything actual does compete with any hallucination. Therefore, an hallucination which, when we are conscious of our material environment, does compete with it in reality, is different *in kind* from an ordinary dream. Science gains nothing by arbitrarily declaring that two experiences so radically different are identical. Anybody would see this if he were not arguing under a dominant idea.

Herr Parish next contends that people who see pictures in crystal balls, and so on, are not so wide awake as to be in their normal consciousness. There is 'dis-sociation' (practically drowsiness), even if only a little. Herr Moll also speaks of crystal-gazing pictures as 'hypnotic phenomena.'<sup>1</sup> Possibly neither of these learned men has ever seen a person attempt crystal-gazing. Herr Parish never asserts any such personal experience as the basis of his opinion about the non-normal state of

<sup>1</sup> Moll, *Hypnotism*, p. 1

the gazer. He reaches this conclusion from an anecdote reported, as a not unfamiliar phenomenon, by a friend of Miss X. But the phenomenon occurred when Miss X. was not crystal-gazing at all! She was looking out of a window in a brown study. This is a noble example of logic. Some one says that Miss X. was not in her normal consciousness on a certain occasion when she was *not* crystal-gazing, and that this condition is familiar to the observer. Therefore, argues Herr Parish, nobody is in his normal consciousness when he is crystal-gazing.

In vain may 'so good an observer as Miss X. think herself fully awake' (as she does think herself) when crystal-gazing, because once, when she happened to have 'her eyes *fixed on the window*,' her expression was '*associated*' by a friend 'with *something uncanny*,' and she afterwards spoke '*in a dreamy, far-away tone*' (p. 297). Miss X., though extremely 'wide awake,' may have looked dreamily at a window, and may have seen mountains and marvels. But the point is that she was not voluntarily gazing at a crystal for amusement or experiment—perhaps trying to see how a microscope affected the pictures—or to divert a friend.

I appeal to the shades of Aristotle and Bacon against scientific logic in the hands of Herr Parish. Here is his syllogism :

A. is occasionally dreamy when *not* crystal-gazing.

A. is human.

Therefore every human being, when crystal-gazing, is more or less asleep.

He infers a general affirmative from a single affirmative which happens not to be to the point. It is exactly as if Herr Parish argued :

Mrs. B. spends hours in shopping.

Mrs. B. is human.

Therefore every human being is always late for dinner.

Miss X., I think, uplifted her voice in some review,

and maintained that, when crystal-gazing, she was quite in her normal state, *dans son assiette*.

Yet Herr Parish would probably say to any crystal-gazer who argued thus, 'Oh, no; pardon me, you were *not* wholly awake—you were a-dream. I know better than you.' But, as he has not seen crystal-gazers, while I have, many scores of times, I prefer my own opinion. And so, as this assertion about the percipient's being 'dissociated,' or asleep, or not awake, is certainly untrue of all crystal-gazers in my considerable experience, I cannot accept it on the authority of Herr Parish, who makes no claim to any personal experience at all.

As to crystal-gazing, when the gazer is talking, laughing, chatting, making experiments in turning the ball, changing the light, using prisms and magnifying-glasses, dropping matches into the water-jug, and so on, how can we possibly say that 'it is impossible to distinguish between waking hallucinations and those of sleep' (p. 300)? If so, it is impossible to distinguish between sleeping and waking altogether. We are all like the dormouse! Herr Parish is reasoning here *a priori*, without any personal knowledge of the facts; and, above all, he is under the 'dominant idea' of his own theory—that of *dissociation*.

Herr Parish next crushes telepathy by an argument which—like one of the reasons why the bells were not rung for Queen Elizabeth, namely, that there were no bells to ring—might have come first, and alone. We are told (in italics—very impressive to the popular mind): '*No matter how great the number of coincidences, they afford not even the shadow of a proof for telepathy*' (p. 301). What, not even if all hallucinations, or ninety-nine per cent., coincided with the death of the person seen? In heaven's name, why not? Why, because the 'weightiest' cause of all has been omitted from our calculations, namely, our good old friend, *the association of ideas* (p. 302). Our side cannot prove the *absence* (italics) of *the association of ideas*. Certainly we cannot; but ideas in endless millions are being associated all day

long. A hundred thousand different, unnoticed associations may bring Jones to my mind, or Brown. But I don't therefore see Brown, or Jones, who is not there. Still less do I see Dr. Parish, or Nebuchadnezzar, or a monkey, or a salmon, or a golf ball, or Arthur's Seat (all of which may be brought to my mind by association of ideas), when they are not present.

Suppose, then, that once in my life I see the absent Jones, who dies in that hour (or within twelve hours). I am puzzled. Why did Association choose that day, of all days in my life, for her solitary freak? And, if this choice of freaks by Association occurs among other people, say two hundred times more often than chance allows, the freak begins to suggest that it may have a cause.

Not even the circumstance cited by Herr Parish, that a drowsy tailor, 'sewing on in a dream,' poor fellow, saw a client in his shop while the client was dying, solves the problem. The tailor is not said even once to have seen a customer who was *not* dying; yet he writes, 'I was accustomed to work all night frequently.' The tailor thinks he was asleep, because he had been making irregular stitches, and perhaps he was. But, out of all his vigils and all his customers, association only formed *one* hallucination, and that was of a dying client whom he supposed to be perfectly well. Why on earth is association so fond of dying people—granting the statistics, which are 'another story'? The explanation explains nothing. Herr Parish only moves the difficulty back a step, and, as we cannot live without association of ideas, they are taken for granted by our side. Association of ideas does not cause hallucinations, as Mrs. Sidgwick remarks, though it may determine their contents.

The difficult theme of coincidental collective hallucinations, as when two or more people at once have, or profess to have, the same false perception of a person who is really absent and dying, is next disposed of by Herr Parish. The same *points de repère*, the same sound, or flicker of light, or arrangement of shadow, may

beget the same or a similar false perception in two or more people at once. Thus two girls, in different rooms, are looking out on different parts of the hall in their house. 'Both heard, at the same time, an [objective?] noise' (p. 313). Then, says Herr Parish, '*the one sister saw her father cross the hall* after entering; the other saw the dog (the usual companion of his walks) run past her door.' Father and dog had not left the dining-room. Herr Parish decides that the same *point de repère* (the apparent noise of a key in the lock of the front door) 'acted by way of suggestion on both sisters,' producing, however, different hallucinations, 'in virtue of the difference of the connected associations.' One girl associated the sound with her honoured sire, the other with his faithful hound; so one saw a dog, and the other saw an elderly gentleman. Now, first, if so, this should *always* be occurring, for we all have different associations of ideas. Thus, we are in a haunted house; there is a noise of a rattling window; I associate it with a burglar, Brown with a milkman, Miss Jones with a lady in green, Miss Smith with a knight in armour. That collection of phantasms should then be simultaneously on view, like the dog and old gentleman; all our reports should vary. But this does not occur. Most unluckily for Herr Parish, he illustrates his theory by telling a story which happens not to be correctly reported. At first I thought that a fallacy of memory, or an optical delusion, had betrayed him again, as in his legend of the waistcoat. But I am now inclined to believe that what really occurred was this: Herr Parish brought out his book in German, before the Report of the Census of Hallucinations was published. In his German edition he probably quoted a story which precisely suited his theory of the origin of collective hallucinations. This anecdote he had found in Prof. Sidgwick's Presidential Address of July 1890.<sup>1</sup> As stated by Prof. Sidgwick, the case just fitted Herr Parish, who refers to it on p. 190, and again on p. 314. He gives no reference, but his version reads

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, vol. vi. p. 433.



like a traditional variant of Prof. Sidgwick's. Now Prof. Sidgwick's version was erroneous, as is proved by the elaborate account of the case in the Report of the Census, which Herr Parish had before him, but neglected when he prepared his English edition. The story was wrong, alas! in the very point where, for Herr Parish's purpose, it ought to have been right. The hallucination is believed *not* to have been collective, yet Herr Parish uses it to explain collective hallucinations. Doubtless he overlooked the accurate version in the Report.<sup>1</sup>

The facts, as there reported, were not what he narrates, but as follows :

Miss C. E. was in the breakfast-room, about 6.30 p.m., in January 1883, and supposed her father to be taking a walk with his dog. She heard noises, which may have had any other cause, but which she took to be the sounds of a key in the door lock, a stick tapping the tiles of the hall, and the patter of the dog's feet on the tiles. She then saw the dog pass the door. Miss C. E. next entered the hall, where she found nobody; but in the pantry she met her sisters—Miss E., Miss H. G. E.—and a working-woman. Miss E. and the working-woman had been in the hall, and there had heard the sound, which they, like Miss C. E., took for that of a key in the lock. They were breaking a little household rule in the hall, so they 'ran straightway into the pantry, meeting Miss H. G. E. on the way.' Miss C. E. and Miss E. and the working-woman all heard the noise as of a key in the lock, but nobody is said to have 'seen the father cross the hall' (as Herr Parish asserts). 'Miss H. G. E. was of opinion that Miss E. (now dead) saw *nothing*, and Miss C. E. was inclined to agree with her.' Miss E. and the work-woman (now dead) were 'emphatic as to the father having entered the house;' but this the two only *inferred* from hearing the noise, after which they fled to the pantry. Now, granting that some other noise was mistaken for that of the key in the lock, we have here, *not* (as Herr Parish declares) a *collective* yet discrepant hallucination—

<sup>1</sup> Parish, p. 313.

the discrepancy being caused 'by the difference of connected associations'—but a *solitary* hallucination. Herr Parish, however, inadvertently converts a solitary into a collective hallucination, and then uses the example to explain collective hallucinations in general. He asserts that Miss E. 'saw her father cross the hall.' Miss E.'s sisters think that she saw no such matter. Now, suppose that Mr. E. had died at the moment, and that the case was claimed on our part as a 'collective coincidental hallucination.' How righteously Herr Parish might exclaim that all the evidence was against its being collective! The sound in the lock, heard by three persons, would be, and probably was, another noise misinterpreted. And, in any case, there is no evidence for its having produced *two* hallucinations; the evidence is in exactly the opposite direction.

Here, then, Herr Parish, with the printed story under his eyes, once more illustrates want of attention. In one way his errors improve his case. 'If I, a grave man of science, go on telling distorted legends out of my own head, while the facts are plain in print before me,' Herr Parish may reason, 'how much more are the popular tales about coincidental hallucinations likely to be distorted?' It is really a very strong argument, but not exactly the argument which Herr Parish conceives himself to be presenting.<sup>1</sup>

This unlucky inexactitude is chronic, as we have shown, in Herr Parish's work, and is probably to be explained by inattention to facts, by 'expectation' of suitable facts, and by 'anxiety' to prove a theory. He explains the similar or identical reports of witnesses to a collective hallucination by 'the ease with which such appearances adapt themselves in recollection' (p. 313), especially, of course, after lapse of time. And then he unconsciously illustrates his case by the ease with which printed facts under his very eyes adapt themselves, quite erroneously, to his own memory and personal bias as he copies them on to his paper.

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Report*, pp. 181-83, with Parish, pp. 190 and 313, 314.

Finally he argues that even if collective hallucinations are also 'with comparative frequency' coincidental, that is to be explained thus: 'The rarity and the degree of interest compelled by it' (by such an hallucination) 'will naturally tend to connect itself with some other prominent event; and, conversely, the occurrence of such an event as the death or mortal danger of a friend is most calculated to produce memory illusions of this kind.'

In the second case, the excitement caused by the death of a friend is likely, it seems, to make two or more sane people say, and *believe*, that they saw him somewhere else, when he was really dying. The only evidence for this fact is that such illusions occasionally occur, *not* collectively, in some lunatic asylums. 'It is not, however, a form of mnemonic error often observed among the insane.' 'Kraepelin gives two cases.' 'The process occurs sporadically in certain sane people, under certain exciting conditions.' No examples are given! What is rare as an *individual* folly among lunatics, is supposed by Herr Parish to explain the theoretically 'false memory' whereby sane people persuade themselves that they had an hallucination, and persuade others that they were told of it, when no such thing occurred.

To return to our old example. Jones tells me that he has just seen his aunt, whom he knows to be in Timbuctoo. News comes that the lady died when Jones beheld her in his smoking-room. 'Oh, nonsense,' Herr Parish would argue, 'you, Jones, saw nothing of the kind, nor did you tell Mr. Lang, who, I am sorry to find, agrees with you. What happened was *this*: When the awful news came to-day of your aunt's death, you were naturally, and even creditably, excited, especially as the poor lady was killed by being pegged down on an ant-heap. This excitement, rather praiseworthy than otherwise, made you *believe* you had seen your aunt, and *believe* you had told Mr. Lang. He also is a most excitable person, though I admit he never saw your dear aunt in his life. He, therefore (by virtue of his excitement), now *believes* you told him about seeing your unhappy kinswoman. This kind

of false memory is very common. Two cases are recorded by Kraepelin, among the insane. Sure you quite understand my reasoning ?

I quite understand it, but I don't see how it comes to seem good logic to Herr Parish.

The other theory is funnier still. Jones never had an hallucination before. 'The rarity and the degree of interest compelled by it' made Jones 'connect it with some other prominent event,' say, the death of his aunt, which, really, occurred, say, nine months afterwards. But this is a mere case of *evidence*, which it is the affair of the S.P.R. to criticise.

Herr Parish is in the happy position called in American speculative circles 'a straddle.' If a man has an hallucination when alone, he was in circumstances conducive to the sleeping state. So the hallucination is probably a dream. But, if the seer was in company, who all had the same hallucination, then they all had the same *points de repère*, and the same adaptive memories. So Herr Parish kills with both barrels.

If anything extraneous could encourage a belief in coincidental and veridical hallucinations, it would be these 'Oppositions of Science.' If a learned and fair opponent can find no better proofs than logic and (unconscious) perversions of facts like the logic and the statements of Herr Parish, the case for telepathic hallucinations may seem strong indeed. But we must grant him the existence of the adaptive and mythopœic powers of memory, which he asserts, and also illustrates. I grant, too, that a census of 17,000 inquiries may only have 'skimmed the cream off' (p. 87). Another dip of the net, bringing up 17,000 fresh answers, might alter the whole aspect of the case, one way or the other. Moreover, we cannot get scientific evidence in this way of inquiry. If the public were interested in the question, and understood its nature, and if everybody who had an hallucination at once recorded it in black and white, duly attested on oath before a magistrate, by persons to whom

he reported, before the coincidence was known, and if all such records, coincidental or not, were kept in the British Museum for fifty years, then an examination of them might teach us something. But all this is quite impossible. We may form a belief, on this point of veridical hallucinations, for ourselves, but beyond that it is impossible to advance. Still, Science might read her brief!

## APPENDIX B

*THE POLTERGEIST AND HIS EXPLAINERS.*

IN the chapter on 'Fetishism and Spiritualism' it was suggested that the movements of inanimate objects, apparently without contact, may have been one of the causes leading to fetishism, to the opinion that a spirit may inhabit a stick, stone, or what not. We added that, whether such movements were caused by trickery or not, was inessential as long as the savage did not discover the imposture.

The evidence for the genuine supernormal character of such phenomena was not discussed, that we might preserve the continuity of the general argument. The history of such phenomena is too long for statement here. The same reports are found 'from China to Peru,' from Eskimo to the Cape, from Egyptian magical papyri to yesterday's provincial newspaper.<sup>1</sup>

About 1850-1870 phenomena, which had previously been reported as of sporadic and spontaneous occurrence, were domesticated and organised by Mediums, generally American. These were imitators of the enigmatic David Dunglas Home, who was certainly a most oddly gifted man, or a most successful impostor. A good deal of scientific attention was given to the occurrences; Mr. Darwin, Mr. Tyndall, Dr. Carpenter, Mr. Huxley, had all glanced at the phenomena, and been present at *séances*. In most cases the exhibitions, in the dark, or in a very bad light, were impudent impostures, and were so regarded by the *savants* who looked into them. A series of

<sup>1</sup> A sketch of the history will be found in the author's *Cock Lane and Common Sense*.

exposures culminated in the recent detection of Eusapia Paladino by Dr. Hodgson and other members of the S.P.R. at Cambridge.

There was, however, an apparent exception. The arch mystagogue, Home, though by no means a clever man, was never detected in fraudulent productions of fetishistic phenomena. This is asserted here because several third-hand stories of detected frauds by Home are in circulation, and it is hoped that a well-attested first-hand case of detection may be elicited.

Of Home's successes with Sir William Crookes, Lord Crawford, and others, something remains to be said; but first we shall look into attempted explanations of alleged physical phenomena occurring *not* in the presence of a paid or even of a recognised 'Medium.' It will appear, we think, that the explanations of evidence so widely diffused, so uniform, so old, and so new, are far from satisfactory. Our inference would be no more than that our eyes should be kept on such phenomena, if they are reported to recur.

Mr. Tylor says, 'I am well aware that the problem [of these phenomena] is one to be discussed on its merits, in order to arrive at a distinct opinion how far it may be connected with facts insufficiently appreciated and explained by science, and how far with superstition, delusion, and sheer knavery. Such investigation, pursued by careful observation in a scientific spirit, would seem apt to throw light on some interesting psychological questions.'

Acting on Mr. Tylor's hint, Mr. Podmore puts forward as explanations (1) fraud; (2) hallucinations caused by excited expectation, and by the *Schwärmerei* consequent on sitting in hushed hope of marvels.

To take fraud first: Mr. Podmore has collected, and analyses, eleven recent sporadic cases of volatile objects.<sup>1</sup> His first instance (Worksop, 1883) yields no proof of fraud, and can only be dismissed by reason of the bad

<sup>1</sup> The best source is his article on 'Poltergeists.' *Proceedings* xi. 45-116. See, too, his 'Poltergeists' in *Studies in Psychical Research*.

character of the other cases, and because Mr. Podmore took the evidence five weeks after the events. To this example we confine ourselves. This case appears to have been first reported in the 'Retford and Gainsborough Times' 'early in March,' 1883 (really March 9). It does not seem to have struck Mr. Podmore that he should publish these contemporary reports, to show us how far they agree with evidence collected by him on the spot five weeks later. To do this was the more necessary, as he lays so much stress on failure of memory. I have therefore secured the original newspaper report, by the courtesy of the editor. To be brief, the phenomena began on February 20 or 21, by the table voluntarily tipping up, and upsetting a candle, while Mrs. White only saved the wash tub by alacrity and address. 'The whole incident struck her as very extraordinary.' It is not in the newspaper report. On February 26, Mr. White left his home, and a girl, Eliza Rose, 'child of a half-imbecile mother,' was admitted by the kindness of Mrs. White to share her bed. The girl was eighteen years of age, was looking for a place as servant, and nothing is said in the newspaper about her mother. Mr. White returned on Wednesday night, but left on Thursday morning, returning on Friday afternoon. On Thursday, in Mr. White's absence, phenomena set in. On Thursday night, in Mr. White's presence, they increased in vigour. A doctor was called in, also a policeman. On Saturday, at 8 A.M., the row recommenced. At 4 P.M. Mr. White sent Eliza Rose away, and peace returned. We now offer the

STATEMENT OF POLICE CONSTABLE HIGGS. A man of good intelligence, and believed to be entirely honest. . . .

'On the night of Friday, March 2nd, I heard of the disturbances at Joe White's house from his young brother, Tom. I went round to the house at 11.55 P.M., as near as I can judge, and found Joe White in the kitchen of his house. There was one candle lighted in the room,



and a good fire burning, so that one could see things pretty clearly. The cupboard doors were open, and White went and shut them, and then came and stood against the chest of drawers. I stood near the outer door. No one else was in the room at the time. White had hardly shut the cupboard doors when they flew open, and a large glass jar came out past me, and pitched in the yard outside, smashing itself. I didn't see the jar leave the cupboard, or fly through the air; it went too quick. But I am quite sure that it wasn't thrown by White or any one else. White couldn't have done it without my seeing him. The jar couldn't go in a straight line from the cupboard out of the door; but it certainly did go.

'Then White asked me to come and see the things which had been smashed in the inner room. He led the way and I followed. As I passed the chest of drawers in the kitchen I noticed a tumbler standing on it. Just after I passed I heard a crash, and looking round, I saw that the tumbler had fallen on the ground in the direction of the fireplace, and was broken. I don't know how it happened. There was no one else in the room.

'I went into the inner room, and saw the bits of pots and things on the floor, and then I came back with White into the kitchen. The girl Rose had come into the kitchen during our absence. She was standing with her back against the bin near the fire. There was a cup standing on the bin, rather nearer the door. She said to me, "Cup'll go soon; it has been down three times already." She then pushed it a little farther on the bin, and turned round and stood talking to me by the fire. She had hardly done so, when the cup jumped up suddenly about four or five feet into the air, and then fell on the floor and smashed itself. White was sitting on the other side of the fire.

'Then Mrs. White came in with Dr. Lloyd; also Tom White and Solomon Wass. After they had been in two or three minutes, something else happened. Tom White and Wass were standing with their backs to the fire, just in front of it. Eliza Rose and Dr. Lloyd were

near them, with their backs turned towards the bin, the doctor nearer to the door. I stood by the drawers, and Mrs. White was by me near the inner door. Then suddenly a basin, which stood on the end of the bin near the door, got up into the air, *turning over and over as it went. It went up not very quickly, not as quickly as if it had been thrown.* When it reached the ceiling it fell plump and smashed. I called Dr. Lloyd's attention to it, and we all saw it. No one was near it, and I don't know how it happened. I stayed about ten minutes more, but saw nothing else. I don't know what to make of it all. I don't think White or the girl could possibly have done the things which I saw.'

This statement was made five weeks after date to Mr. Podmore. We compare it with the intelligent constable's statement made between March 3 and March 8, that is, immediately after the events, and reported in the local paper of March 9.

STATEMENT BY POLICE CONSTABLE HIGGS.—During Friday night, Police Constable Higgs visited the house, and concerning the visit he makes the following statement. 'About ten minutes past [to?] twelve on Friday night, I was met in Bridge Street by Buck Ford, and Joe's brother, Tom White and Dr. Lloyd. Tom said to me, "Will you go with us to Joe's, and you will see something you have never seen before?" I went; and when I got into the house Joe went and shut the cupboard doors. No sooner had he done so than the doors flew open again, and an ordinary sized glass jar flew across the kitchen, out of the door into the yard. A sugar jar also flew out of the cupboard unseen. In fact, we saw nothing and heard nothing until we heard it smash. The distance travelled by the articles was about seven yards. I stood a minute or two, and then the glass which I noticed on the drawers jumped off the drawers a yard away, and broke in about a hundred bits. The next thing was a cup, which stood on the flour-bin just beyond the yard

door. It flew upwards, and then fell to the ground and broke. The girl said that this cup had been on the floor three times, and that she had picked it up just before it went off the bench. I said, "I suppose the cup will be the next." The cup fell a distance of two yards away from the flour-bin. Dr. Lloyd had been in the next house lancing the back of a little boy who had been removed there. He now came in, and we began talking, the doctor saying, "It is a most mysterious thing." He turned with his back to the flour-bin, on which stood a basin. The basin flew up into the air obliquely, went over the doctor's head, and fell at his feet in pieces. The doctor then went out. I stood a short time longer, but saw nothing further. There were six persons in the room while these things were going on, and so far as I could see, there was no human agency at work. I had not the slightest belief in anything appertaining to the supernatural. I left just before one o'clock, having been in the house thirty minutes.'

As the policeman says, there was nothing 'supernatural,' but there was an appearance of something rather supernormal. On the afternoon of Saturday White sent the girl Rose away, and a number of people watched in his house till after midnight. Though the sceptical reporter thought that objects were placed where they might easily be upset, none were upset. The ghost was laid. 'Excited expectation' was so false to its function as to beget no phenomena.

The newspaper reports contain no theory that will account for White's breaking his furniture and crockery, nor for Rose's securing her own dismissal from a house where she was kindly received by wilfully destroying the property of her hostess. An amateur published a theory of silken threads attached to light articles, and thick cords to heavy articles, whereof no trace was found by witnesses who examined the volatile objects. An elaborate machinery of pulleys fixed in the ceiling, the presence of a trickster in a locked pantry, apparent errors in the account of the flight of the objects, and a number of

accomplices, were all involved in this local explanation, the explainer admitting that he could not imagine *why* the tricks were played. Six or eight pounds' worth of goods were destroyed, nor is it singular that poor Mrs. White wept over her shattered penates.

The destruction began, of course, in the *absence* of White. The girl Rose gave to the newspaper the same account as the other witnesses, but, as White thought *she* was the agent, so she suspected White, though she admitted that he was not at home when the trouble arose.

Mr. Podmore, reviewing the case, says, 'The phenomena described are quite inexplicable by ordinary mechanical means.'<sup>1</sup> Yet he elsewhere<sup>2</sup> suggests that Rose herself, 'as the instrument of mysterious agencies, or simply as a half-witted girl, gifted with abnormal cunning and love of mischief, may have been directly responsible for all that took place.' That is to say, a half-witted girl could do (barring 'mysterious agencies') 'what is quite inexplicable by ordinary mechanical means,' while, according to the policeman, she was not even present on some occasions. But it is not easy to make out, in the evidence of White, the other witness, whether this girl Rose was present or not when the jar flew circuitously out of the cupboard, a thing easily worked by a half-witted girl. Such discrepancies are common in all evidence to the most ordinary events. In any case a half-witted girl, in Mr. Podmore's theory, can do what 'is quite inexplicable by ordinary mechanical means.' There is not the shadow of evidence that the girl Rose had the inestimable advantage of being 'half-witted'; she is described by Mr. Podmore as 'the child of an imbecile mother.' The phenomena began, in an isolated case (the tilted table), *before* Rose entered the house. She was admitted in kindness, acted as a maid, and her interest was *not* to break the crockery and upset furniture. The troubles, which began before the girl's arrival, were apparently active when she was not

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Psychological Research*, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> See Preface to this edition for correction.

present, and, if she *was* present, she could not have caused them 'by ordinary mechanical means,' while of extraordinary mechanical means there was confessedly no trace. The disturbances ceased after she was dismissed—nothing else connects her with them.

Mr. Podmore's attempt at a normal explanation by fraud, therefore, is of no weight. He has to exaggerate the value, as disproof, of such discrepancies as occur in all human evidence on all subjects. He has to lay stress on the interval of five weeks between the events and the collection of testimony by himself. But contemporary accounts appeared in the local newspapers, and he does not compare the contemporary with the later evidence, as we have done. There is one discrepancy which looks as if a witness, not here cited, came to think he had seen what he heard talked about. Finally, after abandoning the idea that mechanical means can possibly have produced the effect, Mr. Podmore falls back on the cunning of a half-witted girl whom nothing shows to have been half-witted. The alternative is that the girl was 'the instrument of mysterious agencies.'

So much for the hypothesis of a fraud, which has been identical in results from China to Peru and from Greenland to the Cape.

We now turn to the other, and concomitantly active cause, in Mr. Podmore's theory, hallucination. 'Many of the witnesses described the articles as moving slowly through the air, or exhibiting some peculiarity of flight.' (See *e.g.* the Worksop case.) Mr. Podmore adds another English case, presently to be noted, and a German one. 'In default of any experimental evidence' (how about Mr. William Crookes's?) 'that disturbances of this kind are ever due to abnormal agency, I am disposed to explain the appearance of moving slowly or flying as a sensory illusion, conditioned by the excited state of the percipient.' ('Studies,' 157, 158.)

Before criticising this explanation, let us give the English affair, alluded to by Mr. Podmore.

The most curious modern case known to me is not of

recent date, but it occurred in full daylight, in the presence of many witnesses, and the phenomena continued for weeks. The events were of 1849, and the record is expanded, by Mr. Bristow, a spectator, from an account written by him in 1854. The scene was Swanland, near Hull, in a carpenter's shop, where Mr. Bristow was employed with two fellow workmen. To be brief, they were pelted by odds and ends of wood, about the size of a common matchbox. Each blamed the others, till this explanation became untenable. The workrooms and space above were searched to no purpose. The bits of wood sometimes danced along the floor, more commonly sailed gently along, or "moved as if borne on gently heaving waves." This sort of thing was repeated during six weeks. One piece of wood "came from a distant corner of the room towards me, describing what may be likened to a geometrical square, or corkscrew of about eighteen inches diameter. . . . Never was a piece seen to come in at the doorway." Mr. Bristow deems this period 'the most remarkable episode in my life.' (June 27, 1891.) The phenomena 'did not depend on the presence of any one person or number of persons.'

Going to Swanland, in 1891, Mr. Sidgwick found one surviving witness of these occurrences, who averred that the objects could not have been thrown because of the eccentricities of their course, which he described in the same way as Mr. Bristow. The thrower must certainly have had a native genius for 'pitching' at base-ball. This witness, named Andrews, was mentioned by Mr. Bristow in his report, but not referred to by him for confirmation. Those to whom he referred were found to be dead, or had emigrated. The villagers had a superstitious theory about the phenomena being provoked by a dead man, whose affairs had not been settled to his liking. So Mr. Darwin's spoon danced—on a grave.<sup>1</sup>

This case has a certain interest *à propos* of Mr. Podmore's surmise that all such phenomena arise in trickery, which produces excitement in the spectators,

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, S.P.R. vii. 383-394.

while excitement begets hallucination, and hallucination takes the form of seeing the thrown objects move in a non-natural way. Thus, I keep throwing things about. You, not detecting this stratagem, get excited, consequently hallucinated, and you believe you see the things move in spirals, or undulate as if on waves, or hop, or float, or glide in an impossible way. So close is the uniformity of hallucination that these phenomena are described, in similar terms, by witnesses (hallucinated, of course) in times old and new, as in cases cited by Glanvil, Increase Mather, Telfer (of Rerrick), and, generally, in works of the seventeenth century. Nor is this uniform hallucination confined to England. Mr. Podmore quotes a German example, and I received a similar testimony (to the flight of an object round a corner) from a gentleman who employed Esther Teed, 'the Amherst Mystery,' in his service. *He* was not excited, for he was normally engaged in his normal stable, when the incident occurred unexpectedly as he was looking after his live stock. One may add the case of Cideville (1851) and Sir W. Crookes's evidence, and that of Mr. Schhappoff.

Mr. Podmore must, therefore, suppose that, in states of excitement, the same peculiar form of hallucination develops itself uniformly in America, France, Germany, and England (not to speak of Russia), and persists through different ages. This is a novel and valuable psychological law. Moreover, Mr. Podmore must hold that 'excitement' lasted for six weeks among the carpenters in the shop at Swanland, one of whom writes like a man of much intelligence, and has thriven to be a master in his craft. It is difficult to believe that he was excited for six weeks, and we still marvel that excitement produces the same uniformity of hallucination, affecting policemen, carpenters, marquises, and a F.R.S. We allude to Sir W. Crookes's case.

Strictly scientific examination of these prodigies has been very rare. The best examples are the experiments of Sir William Crookes, F.R.S., with Home.<sup>1</sup> He de-

<sup>1</sup> See Sir W. Crookes's *Researches in Spiritualism*.

monstrated, by means of a machine constructed for the purpose, and automatically registering, that, in Home's presence, a balance was affected to the extent of two pounds when Home was not in contact with the table on which the machine was placed. He also saw objects float in air, with a motion like that of a piece of wood on small waves of the sea (clearly excitement producing hallucination), while Home was at a distance, other spectators holding his hands, and his feet being visibly enclosed in a kind of cage. All present held each other's hands, and all witnessed the phenomena. Sir W. Crookes being, professionally, celebrated for the accuracy of his observations, these circumstances are difficult to explain, and these are but a few cases among multitudes.

I venture to conceive that, on reflection, Mr. Podmore will doubt whether he has discovered an universal law of excited mal-perception, or whether the remarkable, and certainly undesigned, coincidence of testimony to the singular flight of objects does not rather point to an 'abnormal agency' uniform in its effects. Contagious hallucination cannot affect witnesses ignorant of each other's existence in many lands and ages, nor could they cook their reports to suit reports of which they never heard.

We now turn to peculiarities in the so-called Medium, such as floating in air, change of bulk, and escape from lesion when handling or treading in fire. Mr. Tylor says nothing of Sir William Crookes's cases (1871), but speaks of the alleged levitation, or floating in air, of savages and civilised men. These are recorded in Buddhist and Neoplatonic writings, and among Red Indians, in Tonquin (where a Jesuit saw and described the phenomena, 1730), in the 'Acta Sanctorum,' and among modern spiritualists. In 1760, Lord Elcho, being at Rome, was present at the *procès* for canonising a Saint (unnamed), and heard witnesses swear to having seen the holy man levitated. Sir W. Crookes attests having seen Home float in air on several occasions. In 1871, the Master of Lindsay, now Lord Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., gave the follow-



ing evidence, which was corroborated by the two other spectators, Lord Adare and Captain Wynne.

'I was sitting with Mr. Home and Lord Adare and a cousin of his. During the sitting, Mr. Home went into a trance, and in that state was carried out of the window in the room next to where we were, and was brought in at our window. The distance between the windows was about seven feet six inches, and there was not the slightest foothold between them, nor was there more than a twelve-inch projection to each window, which served as a ledge to put flowers on. *We heard the window in the next room lifted up*, and almost immediately after we saw Home floating in the air outside our window. The moon was shining full into the room; my back was to the light, and I saw the shadow on the wall of the window sill, and Home's feet about six inches above it. He remained in this position for a few seconds, then raised the window and glided into the room feet foremost and sat down.

'Lord Adare then went into the next room to look at the window from which he had been carried. It was raised about eighteen inches, and he expressed his wonder how Mr. Home had been taken through so narrow an aperture. Home said, still entranced, "I will show you," and then with his back to the window he leaned back and was shot out of the aperture, head first, with the body rigid, and then returned quite quietly. The window is about seventy feet from the ground.' The hypothesis of a mechanical arrangement of ropes or supports outside has been suggested, but does not cover the facts as described.

Mr. Podmore, who quotes this, offers the explanation that the witnesses were excited, and that Home 'thrust his head and shoulders out of the window.' But, if he did, they could not see him do it, for he was in the next room. A brick wall was between them and him. Their first view of Home was 'floating in the air outside our window.' It is not very easy to hold that a belief to which the collective evidence is so large and universal, as the belief in levitation, was caused by a series of saints,

sorcerers, and others thrusting their heads and shoulders out of windows where the observers could not see them. Nor in Lord Crawford's case is it easy to suppose that three educated men, if hallucinated, would all be hallucinated in the same way.

The argument of excited expectation and consequent hallucination does not apply to Mr. Hamilton Aidé and M. Alphonse Karr, neither of whom was a man of science. Both were extremely prejudiced against Home, and at Nice went to see, and, if possible, to expose him. Home was a guest at a large villa in Nice, M. Karr and Mr. Aidé were two of a party in a spacious brilliantly lighted salon, where Home received them. A large heavy table, remote from their group, moved towards them. M. Karr then got under a table which rose in air, and carefully examined the space beneath, while Mr. Aidé observed it from above. Neither of them could discover any explanation of the phenomenon, and they walked away together, disgusted, disappointed, and reviling Home.<sup>1</sup>

In this case there was neither excitement nor desire to believe, but a strong wish to disbelieve and to expose Home. If two such witnesses could be hallucinated, we must greatly extend our notion of the limits of the capacity for entertaining hallucinations.

One singular phenomenon was reported in Home's case, which has, however, little to do with any conceivable theory of spirits. He was said to become elongated in trance.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Podmore explains that 'perhaps he really stretched himself to his full height'—one of the easiest ways conceivable of working a miracle. Iamblichus reports the same phenomenon in his possessed men.<sup>3</sup> Iamblichus adds that they were sometimes broadened as well as lengthened. Now, M. Féré observes that 'any part of the body of an hysterical patient may change in volume, simply owing to the fact that the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Aidé has given me this information. He recorded the circumstances in his Diary at the time.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of Dialectical Society*, p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> See Porphyry, in Parthey's edition (Berlin, 1857), iii. 4.

patient's attention is fixed on that part.'<sup>1</sup> Conceivably the elongation of Home and the ancient Egyptian mediums may have been an extreme case of this 'change of volume.' Could this be proved by examples, Home's elongation would cease to be a 'miracle.' But it would follow that in this case observers were *not* hallucinated, and the presumption would be raised that they were not hallucinated in the other cases. Indeed, this argument is of universal application.

There is another class of 'physical phenomena,' which has no direct bearing on our subject. Many persons, in many ages, are said to have handled or walked through fire, not only without suffering pain, but without lesion of the skin. Iamblichus mentions this as among the peculiarities of his 'possessed' men; and in 'Modern Mythology' (1897) I have collected first-hand evidence for the feat in classical times, and in India, Fiji, Bulgaria, Trinidad, the Straits Settlements, and many other places. The evidence is that of travellers, officials, missionaries, and others, and is backed (for what photographic testimony is worth) by photographs of the performance. To hold glowing coals in his hand, and to communicate the power of doing so to others, was in Home's *répertoire*. Lord Crawford saw it done on eight occasions, and himself received from Home's hand the glowing coal unharmed. A friend of my own, however, still bears the blister of the hurt received in the process. Sir W. Crookes's evidence follows:

'At Mr. Home's request, whilst he was entranced, I went with him to the fireplace in the back drawing-room. He said, "We want you to notice particularly what Dan is doing." Accordingly I stood close to the fire, and stooped down to it when he put his hands in.

'Mr. Home then waved the handkerchief about in the air two or three times, held it above his head, and then folded it up and laid it on his hand like a cushion. Putting his other hand into the fire, he took out a large

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin de la Société de Biologie*, 1880, p. 399.

lump of cinder, red-hot at the lower part, and placed the red part on the handkerchief. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been in a blaze. In about half a minute he took it off the handkerchief with his hand, saying, "As the power is not strong, if we leave the coal longer it will burn." He then put it on his hand, and brought it to the table in the front room, where all but myself had remained seated.'

Mr. Podmore explains that only two candles and the fire gave light on one occasion, and that 'possibly' Home's hands were protected by some 'non-conducting substance.' He does not explain how this substance was put on Lord Crawford's hands, nor tell us what this valuable substance may be. None is known to science, though it seems to be known to Fijians, Tongans, Klings, and Bulgarians, who walk through fire unhurt.

It is not necessary to believe Sir W. Crookes's assertions that he saw Home perform the fire-tricks, for we can fall back on the lack of light (only two candles and the fire-light), as also on the law of hallucination caused by excitement. But it is necessary to believe this distinguished authority's statement about his ignorance of 'some non-conducting substance : '

'Schoolboys' books and mediæval tales describe how this can be done with alum and other ingredients. It is possible that the skin may be so hardened and thickened by such preparations that superficial charring might take place without the pain becoming great; but the surface of the skin would certainly suffer severely. After Home had recovered from the trance, I examined his hand with care to see if there were any signs of burning or of previous preparation. I could detect no trace of injury to the skin, which was soft and delicate, like a woman's. Neither were there signs of any preparation having been previously applied. I have often seen conjurers and others handle red-hot coals and iron, but there were always palpable signs of burning.'

In September 1897 a crew of passengers went from New Zealand to see the Fijian rites, which, as reported in

<sup>1</sup> Crookes, *Proceedings*, ix. 308.

the 'Fiji Times,' corresponded exactly with the description published by Mr. Basil Thomson, himself a witness. The interesting point, historically, is the combination in Home of all the *répertoire* of the possessed men in Iamblichus. We certainly cannot get rid of the fire-trick by aid of a hypothetical 'non-conducting substance.' Till the 'substance' is tested experimentally it is not a *vera causa*. We might as well say 'spirits' at once. Both that 'substance' and those 'spirits' are equally 'in the air.' Yet Mr. Podmore's 'explanations' (not satisfactory to himself) are conceived so thoroughly in the spirit of popular science—one of them casually discovering a new psychological law, a second contradicting the facts it seeks to account for, a third generously inventing an unknown substance—that they ought to be welcomed by reviewers and lecturers.

It seems wiser to admit our ignorance and suspend our belief.

Here closes the futile chapter of explanations. Fraud is a *vera causa*, but an hypothesis difficult of application when it is admitted that the effects could not be caused by ordinary mechanical means. Hallucination, through excitement, is a *vera causa*, but its remarkable uniformity, as described by witnesses from different lands and ages, knowing nothing of each other, makes us hesitate to accept a sweeping hypothesis of hallucination. The case for it is not confirmed, when we have the same reports from witnesses certainly not excited.

This extraordinary bundle, then, of reports, practically identical, of facts paralysing to belief, this bundle made up of statements from so many ages and countries, can only be 'filed for reference.' But it is manifest that any savage who shared the experiences of Sir W. Crookes, Lord Crawford, Mr. Hamilton Aidé, M. Robert de St. Victor at Cideville, and Policeman Higgs at Worksop, would believe that a spirit might tenant a stick or stone—so believing he would be a Fetishist. Thus even of Fetishism the probable origin is in a region of which we know nothing—the *x* region.

## APPENDIX C

## CRYSTAL-GAZING

SINCE the chapter on crystal-gazing was in type, a work by Dr. Pierre Janet has appeared, styled 'Les Névroses et les Idées Fixes.'<sup>1</sup> It contains a chapter on crystal-gazing. The opinion of Dr. Janet, as that of a savant familiar, at the Salpêtrière, with 'neurotic' visionaries, cannot but be interesting. Unluckily, the essay must be regarded as seriously impaired in value by Dr. Janet's singular treatment of his subject. Nothing is more necessary in these researches than accuracy of statement. Now, Dr. Janet has taken a set of experiences, or experiments, of Miss X.'s from that lady's interesting essay, already cited; has attributed them, not to Miss X., but to various people—for example, to *une jeune fille, une pauvre voyante, une personne un peu mystique*; has altered the facts in the spirit of romance; and has triumphantly given that explanation, revival of memory, which was assigned by Miss X. herself.

Throughout his paper Dr. Janet appears as the calm man of science pronouncing judgment on the visionary vagaries of 'haunted' young girls and disappointed seeresses. No such persons were concerned; no such hauntings, supposed premonitions, or 'disillusions' occurred; the romantic and 'marvellous' circumstances are mythopœic accretions due to Dr. Janet's own memory or fancy; his scientific explanation is that given by his trinity of *jeune fille, pauvre voyante, and personne un peu mystique*.

<sup>1</sup> Alcan, Paris, 1898.

Being much engaged in the study of 'neurotic' and hysterical patients, Dr. Janet thinks that they are most apt to see crystal visions. Perhaps they are; and one doubts if their descriptions are more to be trusted than the romantic essay of their medical attendant. In citing Miss X.'s paper (as he did), Dr. Janet ought to have reported her experiments correctly, ought to have attributed them to herself, and should, decidedly, have remarked that the explanation he offered was her own hypothesis, verified by her own exertions.

Not having any acquaintances in neurotic circles, I am unable to say whether such persons supply more cases of the faculty of crystal vision than ordinary people; while their word, one would think, is much less to be trusted than that of men and women in excellent health. The crystal visions which I have cited from my own knowledge (and I could cite scores of others) were beheld by men and women engaged in the ordinary duties of life. Students, barristers, novelists, lawyers, school-masters, school-mistresses, golfers—to all of whom the topic was perfectly new—have all exhibited the faculty. It is curious that an Arabian author of the thirteenth century, Ibn Khaldoun, cited by M. Lefébure, offers the same account of *how* the visions appear as that given by Miss Angus in the *Journal* of the S.P.R., April 1898. M. Lefébure's citation was sent to me in a letter.

I append M. Lefébure's quotation from Ibn Khaldoun. The original is translated in 'Notices et Extraits des MSS. de la Bibliothèque Impériale,' I. xix. p. 643-645.

'Ibn Kaldoun admet que certains hommes ont la faculté de deviner l'avenir.

"Ceux, ajoute-t-il, qui regardent dans les corps diaphanes, tels que les miroirs, les cuvettes remplies d'eau et les liquides; ceux qui inspectent les cœurs, les foies et les os des animaux, . . . tous ces gens-là appartiennent aussi à la catégorie des devins, mais, à cause de l'imperfection de leur nature, ils y occupent un rang inférieur. Pour écarter le voile des sens, le vrai devin n'a pas besoin de grands efforts; quant aux autres, ils tâchent d'arriver au

but en essayant de concentrer en un seul sens toutes leurs perceptions. Comme la vue est le sens le plus noble, ils lui donnent la préférence ; fixant leur regard sur un objet à superficie unie, ils le considèrent avec attention jusqu'à ce qu'ils y aperçoivent la chose qu'ils veulent annoncer. Quelques personnes croient que l'image aperçue de cette manière se dessine sur la surface du miroir ; mais ils se trompent. Le devin regarde fixement cette surface jusqu'à ce qu'elle disparaisse et qu'un rideau, semblable à un brouillard, s'interpose entre lui et le miroir. Sur ce rideau se dessinent les choses qu'il désire apercevoir, et cela lui permet de donner des indications soit affirmatives, soit négatives, sur ce que l'on désire savoir. Il raconte alors les perceptions telles qu'il les reçoit. Les devins, pendant qu'ils sont dans cet état, n'aperçoivent pas ce qui se voit réellement dans le miroir ; c'est un autre mode de perception qui naît chez eux et qui s'opère, non pas au moyen de la vue, mais de l'âme. Il est vrai que, pour eux, les perceptions de l'âme ressemblent à celles des sens au point de les tromper ; fait qui, du reste, est bien connu. La même chose arrive à ceux qui examinent les cœurs et les foies d'animaux. Nous avons vu quelques-uns de ces individus entraver l'opération des sens par l'emploi de simples fumigations, puis se servir d'incantations<sup>1</sup> afin de donner à

<sup>1</sup> L'auteur arabe avait déjà mentionné (p. 209) l'emploi des incantations et indiqué qu'elles étaient un simple adjuvant physique destiné à donner à certains hommes une exaltation dont ils se servaient pour tâcher de découvrir l'avenir.

‘Pour arriver au plus haut degré d'inspiration dont il est capable, le devin doit avoir recours à l'emploi de certaines phrases qui se distinguent par une cadence et un parallélisme particuliers. Il essaye ce moyen afin de soustraire son âme aux influences des sens et de lui donner assez de force pour se mettre dans un contact imparfait avec le monde spirituel.’ Cette agitation d'esprit, jointe à l'emploi des moyens intrinsèques dont nous avons parlé, excite dans son cœur des idées que cet organe exprime par le ministère de la langue. Les paroles qu'il prononce sont tantôt vraies, tantôt fausses. En effet, le devin, voulant suppléer à l'imperfection de son naturel, se sert de moyens tout à fait étrangers à sa faculté perceptive et qui ne

<sup>a</sup> Compare Tennyson's way of attaining a state of trance by repeating to himself his own name.



l'âme la disposition requise ; ensuite ils racontent ce qu'ils ont aperçu. Ces formes, disent-ils, se montrent dans l'air et représentent des personnages : elles leur apprennent, au moyen d'emblèmes et de signes, les choses qu'ils cherchent à savoir. Les individus de cette classe se détachent moins de l'influence des sens que ceux de la classe précédente. ” ”

s'accordent en aucune façon avec elle. Donc la vérité et l'erreur se présentent à lui en même temps, aussi ne doit-on mettre aucune confiance en ses paroles. Quelquefois même il a recours à des suppositions et à des conjectures dans l'espoir de rencontrer la vérité et de tromper ceux qui l'interrogent.

## APPENDIX D

*CHIEFS IN AUSTRALIA*

IN the remarks on Australian religion, it is argued that chiefs in Australia are, at most, very inconspicuous, and that a dead chief cannot have thriven into a Supreme Being. Attention should be called, however, to Mr. Howitt's remarks on Australian 'Head-men,' in his tract on 'The Organisation of Australian Tribes' (pp. 103-113). He attaches more of the idea of power to 'Head-men' than does Mr. Curr in his work, 'The Australian Race.' The Head-men, as a rule, arrive at such influence as they possess by seniority, if accompanied by courage, wisdom, and, in some cases, by magical acquirements. There are traces of a tendency to keep the office (if it may be called one) in the same kinship. 'But Vich Ian Vohr or Chingahgook are not to be found in Australian tribes' (p. 113). I do not observe that the manes or ghost of a dead Head-man receives any worship or service calculated to fix him in the tribal memory, and so lead to the evolution of a deity, though one Head-man was potent through the whole Dieyri tribe over three hundred miles of country. Such a person, if propitiated after death, might conceivably develop into a hero, if not into a creative being. But we must await evidence to the effect that any posthumous reverence was paid to this man, Ialina Piramurana (New Moon). Mr. Howitt's essay is in the 'Transactions of the Royal Society of Victoria for 1889.'

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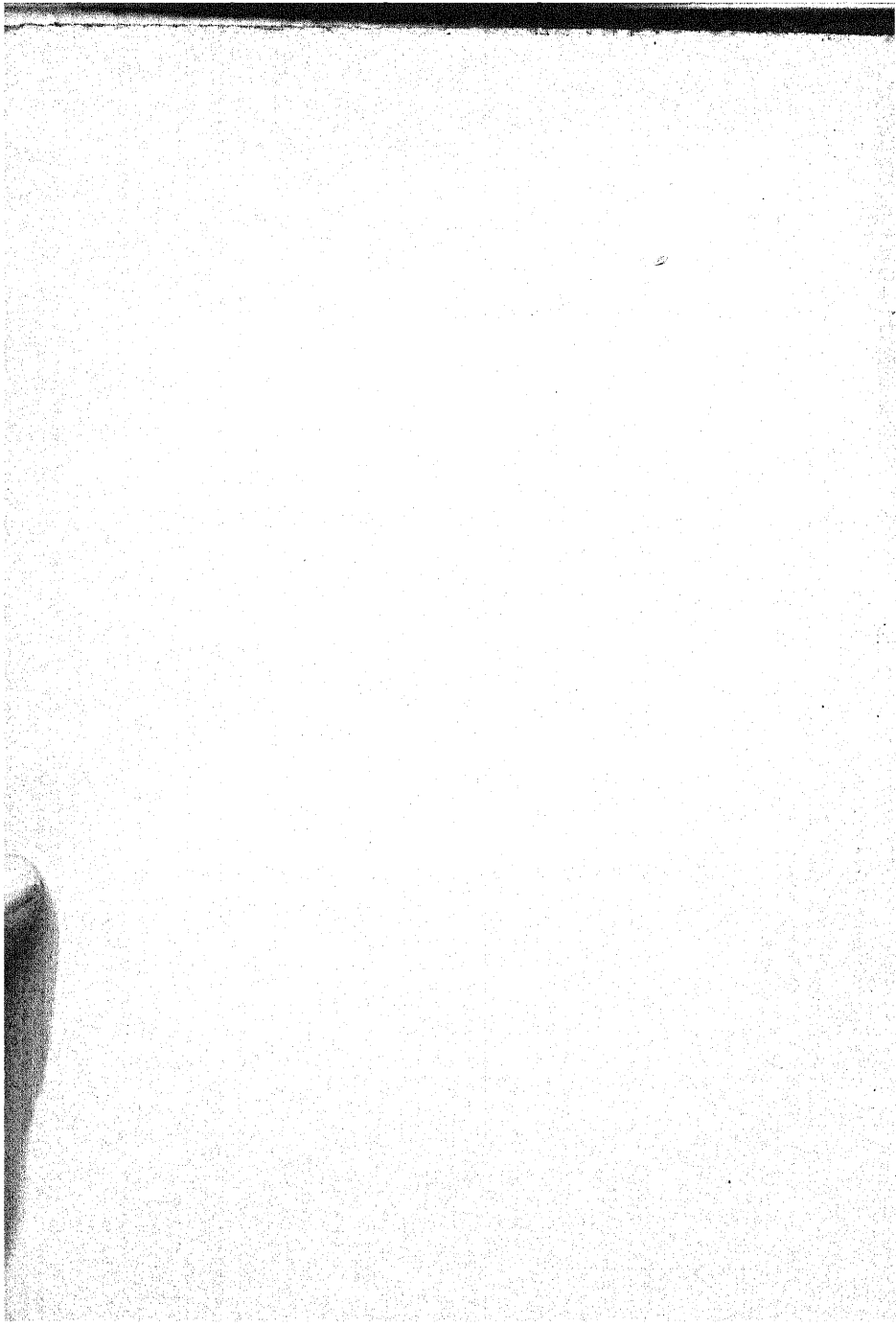
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